

REFLECTIONS  
ON  
THE PROBLEMS OF INDIA

# REFLECTIONS ON THE PROBLEMS OF INDIA



BY

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"CAST FORTH THY WORD, THY ACT, INTO THE EVER-LIVING,  
EVER DYING UNIVERSE: 'TIS A SEED-GRAIN THAT CANNOT DIE.  
UNNOTICED TO-DAY, IT WILL BE FOUND FLOURISHING AS A  
BANYAN GROVE—PERHAPS, ALAS! AS A HEMLOCK FOREST, AFTER  
A THOUSAND YEARS."—*Carlyle.*

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“There are—nothing strikes me much more than this when I talk of the better mind of India,—there are subtle elements, religious, spiritual, mystical, traditional, historical in what we may call for the moment the Indian Mind, which are ~~very~~ hard for the most candid and patient to grasp or to realise the force of , *but we have got to try* —HUGHES”

EPISTLE DEDICATORY  
TO  
Robert Cecil Owen

# EPISTLE DEDICATORY

MY DEAR OWEN,

You will remember on a certain occasion when Boswell was indulging in one of his heroics, Johnson turned round and said, "My dear friend, clear your mind of cant." I believe at the present moment no sounder advice could be given to the Educated Classes in India than in those memorable words of the bluff old Doctor, and my efforts in the following pages are solely or mainly directed towards assisting my Countrymen in clearing their minds of CANT.

One thing I wish you to bear in mind is that I do not pretend to *solve* the Problems of India as most other writers have attempted to do before me; I only venture to give my REFLECTIONS on them, or rather, the thoughts that have crossed my mind while reading all the wit and wisdom that the leaders of Indian thought have so lavished upon them.

Some of my readers will be sorely tried by my reiteration of certain facts and arguments, but repetition is often unavoidable, and at times even necessary for the purpose of driving home a point or establishing a principle, and may be defended on the Socratic dictum that: "We ought to repeat twice, and even thrice, that which is good." Others will be equally distressed by my unmitigated cynicism as displayed in the first two chapters, but I would warn them to withhold their judgment till they have finished the third chapter, otherwise they themselves—unless they have a sufficiently developed personality to follow me in all my passionate ardour and overflowing enthusiasm for the cause of *true*, robust humanity—will stand confessed comparative cynics long before they have gone through half of that chapter.

Mr. H. P. Mody—to whose rare and delicate penmanship many a sentence of mine owes its 'decent existence and position in life,'—took me to task for being at times unnecessarily aggressive, and mixing up persons with the principles they propound. I am not unaware that at times I appear to be aggressive, and am frequently carried away by a vehemence calculated to defeat its own purpose,—but then I felt the

weight and urgency of the Cause I had at heart so much that there was no time for the selection of gentle and agreeable terms and such as would be palatable to the taste of my softly-nurtured readers; and hence I had to unburden myself as quickly as possible, and by such means as were within my reach. It cannot be gainsaid that I sometimes *appear* to become too personal, though in reality this is far from being the case, for in my writings I use a personality merely as a cypher or symbol to render a general but elusive and scarcely noticeable evil, more apparent—a fact, I think, sufficiently borne out by the expressions of unbounded admiration that have escaped me for the persons whose personalities I seem to attack.

"I have always felt and have often said," once pathetically remarked the Honourable Mr Gokhale in the Imperial Council, "that we of the present generation in India can only hope to serve our country by our failures." I don't know how far those who swim with the tide, as the Honourable gentleman most certainly does, can lay this flattering unction to their souls, but we few who swim *against* it, might, if we choose, lay it with greater justice to ours.

Ever your devoted friend,

A. S. W.

"WOODLANDS, PARK, BOMBAY,

April 11, 1915 •

*ELEMENTARY EDUCATION*



"I am glad that there are signs visible on all sides which go to show that this great truth—this profound truth—namely, that there can be no real national progress for our people without universal mass education—this great fundamental and profound truth is being realised in an ampler and ampler measure on all sides of us."

CORNWALLIS

"I do not care that children, as a rule, should learn either reading or writing, because there are very few people in this world who get any good by either. Broadly and practically whatever foolish people *read*, does *them* harm and whatever they *write*, does other people harm."

ELKIN,

## CHAPTER I

### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

IF, at the present moment in India, a person wishes to win the applause of the educated classes, he has simply to walk up a public platform, take up the cries of the day, and descant learnedly on them. He would naturally commence with Elementary Education, take up next the problem of the Caste System, and then go to that of Industrial Development, and end with casting the Political Future of India and showing how its heterogeneous races can become one united, self-governing community. "I ask," questions the facile speaker in a splendid peroration, "what nobler task could be set to our great publicists than that of threshing out these momentous problems of modern India and earning the lasting gratitude of coming generations? When I come to think of the responsibility—the awful responsibility—that rests on each one of us, I stand—simply appalled! Believe me, gentlemen, on the right solution of these problems rests the salvation of three hundred million souls." Some go even further—among them being the first men of our generation—and say that the progress of India rests entirely on the first of these problems. More than a year back Mr. Gokhale said that he was whole-heartedly in accord with the proposition that all national progress was really bound up with the question of mass education, and that there would be no real national progress worth speaking of, unless there were a universal diffusion of education among the masses of the people. "I am glad that there are signs visible on all sides," continued Mr. Gokhale, "which go to show that this great truth—this profound truth—namely, that there can be no real national progress for our people without universal mass education—this great fundamental and profound truth is being realised in an ampler and ampler measure on all sides of us. . . . Four villages out of every five in the country are still without a school; and seven children out of every eight are growing in ignorance and darkness and all the moral and material helplessness which comes of such ignorance and darkness. . . . That ninety-four per cent. of our people should

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be sunk in ignorance, superstition and squalor—I can think of no injustice more cruel or monstrous than this.”

This is a grave indictment. And it becomes all the more serious when we consider the lips from which it fell. In all his claims for elementary education the great Indian is wholly supported by the most enlightened of the ruling princes of India. “In India,” remarked the Gaekwar some time back, “there is a great need of unity. There are several ways of bringing about this end, but the best is universal education. For ignorance is at the root of every kind of misunderstanding; and if we remove ignorance we shall remove misunderstanding and everything that tends to retard the progress of a country. For every kind of progress, whether moral, political, or industrial, *education is necessary.*” His Highness is certainly not the only one among the ruling princes to urge the claims of mass education. The Begum of Bhopal after her return from Europe gave expression to her convictions on this subject in equally emphatic language. “Just now I only wish to say this,” observed Her Highness, “that the great qualities of the Western nations, their expanding wealth, and their swift progress in all the walks of life, are *all* due to the women of all these countries being *well educated* and to the training they impart to their children. . . . You should therefore make the education of your sex the chief object of your lives, you should help the poor, and always remember that the best of all things you can do is to help the members of your sex to get a good education. Remember that among us, even if one generation get good education, the ship of our country will be steered clear of the rocks of poverty and the shoals of ignorance.”

That this opinion about the incalculable advantages of mass education is by no means confined to the most educated of the Indian princes and people, was abundantly proved by the splendid reception which the Elementary Education Bill of Mr. Gokhale met with throughout the country. Mr. Gokhale claimed with perfect justice that no measure of our time had received such weighty, such enthusiastic, such overwhelming public support as this Bill did. Most men of light and leading in the country, men distinguished in every walk of life, in the professions, in business, in public affairs, and in patriotic and philanthropic endeavour were on the side of the Bill. The Indian Press with hardly an exception approved of it, and many Anglo Indian papers, such as the *Times of India* in Bombay, the *Indian Daily News* in Calcutta, and the *Madras Times* in Madras, extended to it their valuable support. The main opposition came from official quarters, and even here, though

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the Government thought it premature and impracticable, they were entirely at one with the underlying object of the Bill. "We are all of us working," asserted Sir Harcourt Butler, "for the same object. I should rejoice as much as they to see a condition of things in which elementary vernacular education could be compulsory and free in India. The Government of India are deeply concerned to bring about such a condition of things. *We are convinced of the necessity of breaking down illiteracy in India*, and the interest of the Government of India has not been confined to words. . . . There are many difficulties ahead, but we shall not flinch, we shall not falter on the way; we are determined resolutely to combat ignorance through the length and breadth of this ancient land, up and down; and though the struggle may be long and arduous, I do believe, with all my heart I do believe, we shall prevail." From the above it is perfectly evident that as regards the principle of mass education all hold the same view, though opinions differ as to the advisability of making it immediately free and compulsory. And this unquestioned acceptance of its principle is not difficult to understand when we consider all the certain advantages that are expected to result from the enlightenment of the masses. The first and foremost argument in its favour is that every civilised country in the world, without an exception, has come to recognise the necessity and incalculable value of mass education. The State to-day accepts everywhere the education of children as a prime duty which it dare not in any conceivable circumstance repudiate. Even if we suppose the advantages of an elementary education to lie mainly in the capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy, as Mr. Gokhale would say, is better than illiteracy any day. But there are weighty reasons why in India particularly the banishment of illiteracy should be considered an achievement sufficient to make the reputation of any statesman. With universal education, claimed Mr. Gokhale, the mass of our countrymen will have a better chance in life. With universal education there will be hopes of better success for all efforts, official or non-official, for the amelioration of the people, their social progress, their moral improvement and their economic well being. "My Lord, with ninety-four per cent. of our countrymen sunk in ignorance," questioned Mr. Gokhale, "how can the advantages of sanitation be properly appreciated? and how can the industrial efficiency of the worker be improved? With ninety-four per cent. unable to read and write, how can the evil of superstition be effectively combated? and how can the general level of life in the country be raised?" Besides,

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elementary education means a keener enjoyment of life, a more refined standard of living, and a higher level of intelligence for the whole community generally. He who reckons these advantages lightly, argued Mr. Gokhale, may as well doubt the value of light or fresh air in the economy of human health.

It will be urged that a person who brings in a Bill on mass education is bound to hold out such high hopes in order to enlist our whole-hearted support of his measure, and consequently we should hesitate to accept them without a careful and independent examination. There might be justification in this line of argument were it not that even the foremost opponent of the Bill claimed for it the same wide possibilities. "Primary education can fit the masses in this country," remarked Sir H. Butler, "to cope on more equal terms with the forces, the strong and pressing forces, of material progress. It can create a greater adaptability to agriculture and industrial advancement. It can enlarge the minds and brighten the outlook of the people, and foster progressive desire which is the root of the economic growth of a community."

If all the wonderful claims put forward by the advocates of elementary education were true—nay, if we could be assured even of some of its advantages, it would indeed be a blessed work, and not a moment should be lost in accepting the principle of free and compulsory education and having it immediately introduced in the country. No line of argument on the score of cost, or want of other requisite facilities, would avail us in the least. It may cost us four millions, as Mr. Gokhale calculates, or eight as Sir H. Butler does, or twelve as a confirmed pessimist might; but at all costs millions must be found, for the advantages that the coming generations would reap therefrom are manifold and out of all proportion to the hardship and sacrifice the present generation would be put to to secure those millions. In a like manner all other obstacles in the way of reaching that noble end must be as resolutely overcome. The Hon. Mr. Sharpe may seriously warn us that money spent on four years of instruction would be thrown away "*sans* inspection, *sans* trained teachers, *sans* houses, *sans* equipment, *sans* everything"; but even if the Hon. Member summoned half a dozen more *sans*'s, it ought not to frighten the Government from taking its courage in both hands and making a determined start in the blessed work of enlightening three hundred millions of people now groping in darkness. For here, as in everything else, we ought to take our stand on that great dictum: "Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by ACTION alone."

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One point is quite clear from all that has been said in the preceding pages—that as regards the principle of mass education, both Officials and Non-officials are in complete accord. They both have an unbounded faith in its righteousness, and where they differ is about the method of putting that principle into practice. The Officials uphold the voluntary, while the Non-officials the compulsory system. But the soundness of the principle itself nobody even dreams of calling into question, for it is taken for granted that mass education could be productive of nothing but good; and he who ventures to doubt its great and manifold uses may as well doubt the utility of fresh air and light. In other words, to every rational creature the “three R’s” are as indispensable as light, warmth and air. Every man born in a civilised country has an undeniable claim on the community to be instructed in the “three R’s”: it is his birthright, and no one who cherishes any sense of common humanity would ever think of depriving him of it. The greatest statesmen and philosophers of the nineteenth century—men who have left an indelible mark on the history of their age—have consistently upheld and strenuously proclaimed the necessity and value of mass education; and it may be said that no man who expects to find even a partial hearing for his words, or any weight attached to them, will ever dare to question the almost unanimous verdict of these great men, with the whole civilised world at their back.

And yet I find myself in the position of such a person. I belong to that small class of men, so accurately described by the Hon. Mr. Gokhale as consisting of “those who could not understand either the necessity or the value of mass education, to whom the dignity of man as man was an incomprehensible idea, and who regarded the poorer classes as made solely to serve those who were above them. These men held such views because they knew no better.” I can quite understand the unmitigated contempt of Mr. Gokhale for “these men” when I remember that the hon. gentleman is brought up in a school of thought which considers that there is nothing more worthy of human effort than the elevation of the lower masses in the scale of humanity. It was a school that came into existence in England in the earlier years of the last century when, owing to the then prevalent doctrine of *laissez faire*, it was found that the social welfare and material interests of the working classes were almost entirely neglected by the governing classes. In accordance with the views of competent critics, the dominant party thought their duty to the community at large ended when they provided the conditions

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necessary for the most rapid material progress, and they believed that if they secured progress in this direction all the other essentials of life would assuredly be added thereto, gradually and indirectly. By this policy unexampled progress was made during the last decade of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and England was able to bear the terrible strain of the Napoleonic Wars; but there was no reason to believe that Englishmen on the whole were either the better or happier for this policy. In fact, it was believed in some quarters that destitution and poverty were on the increase, and the condition of the masses was becoming worse every day and needed the urgent attention of the ruling classes. Philanthropic sentiment and religious enthusiasm were not content to leave the matter there, and public opinion was gradually roused to demand that practical statesmanship and expert advice should be brought to remedy this state of affairs. At any rate, there was a very general consensus of feeling that something must be done, that definite efforts must be made to foster and promote human well-being. This brought over the politics of England a wave of humanitarian enthusiasm which, during the rest of the nineteenth century, swept all before it, and one measure after another was put on the Statute Book for the amelioration of the social, political and material condition of the people. A series of Factory Laws was enacted from time to time, the parliamentary franchise was extended at every available opportunity, and various restrictions on internal trade and heavy imposts on foreign commerce were one after another removed. And though, as a result of years of humanitarian legislation and State benevolence, much of the surface evil was got rid of, still it was found by experience that State interference, after all, could have but very limited effect on the real well-being of the people until the people themselves were sufficiently enlightened to look after their own interests; and that the mere giving of political liberty could not make them worthy of it until they had developed sufficient understanding to make a tolerably intelligent use of the franchise. Then it was that the cry of mass education was raised by some one, to be immediately taken up in divers tones all over England. The highest hopes were given and the most extravagant ideas entertained about the results of popular enlightenment. In fact, it was believed then, as it is now in India, that the solution, the panacea, the way to all social, political and national happiness, collective as well as individual, lay in education and education alone. The consequence was that the Education Bill was brought into

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Parliament and passed into law. I think the time has now come to consider whether the forty years that have gone by since the momentous Act was passed have produced as great a change for the better as the English people were led to expect at the date of its passing. He would indeed be a bold man who would venture to pronounce any definite view on the subject even after carefully weighing all the complicated issues in which it is involved. I know I can get a cartload of numskulls any day, here as well as in England, to recount to me the innumerable advantages that England has derived as the direct outcome of that measure, but the wisest men of England are unable to make any definite statement on the subject. Last year Lord Rosebery, addressing the Educational Institute of Scotland, at Edinburgh, hesitated to pronounce his opinion on the question with reference to Scotland, and remarked, "I cannot test the effect; I do *not* suppose any one could test the effect; but that, after all, is the question that your Edinburgh Institute has to answer; that is the point on which we are all interested, whether old or young—whether your educational system, with all its requirements, all its intricacies, has produced better men for Scotland primarily, and for Great Britain afterwards, than the old system that prevailed before? I suppose everybody here," continued Lord Rosebery, "who is conversant with the students who are being turned out, is perfectly confident of their reply. *I have no such confidence*; but then I have no knowledge on which to base it. There are circumstances connected with our population which do make one feel at times that those Education Acts of Mr. Forster and Lord Young have *not* gathered up the population, have *not* raised them in the way which we were once led to expect. . . . Education is undoubtedly higher in all the standards and all the subjects, all that makes for 'grants'—but I sometimes wonder in myself whether we are turning out better men morally, better men physically, men of more capacity for the work which the world sets before them. If that be so, if there be any doubt permissible on that point, *we must admit that the great Act of Lord Young has not been so great a success as we anticipated.*"

Be this as it may, ever since the middle of last century we have amongst us in India a class of men who, having been brought up on the principles of this English School of Humanitarianism, have retained throughout their lives almost at a fever-heat the enthusiasm it evoked and the sentiment it fostered for the helping and uplifting of those millions who are low down in the scale of humanity. To this glorious band



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of noble-minded Indians belonged the first Sir Jamshedji, Keshub Chunder Sen, Naorosji Furdoonji, Sorabji Bengalee, Ranade and Telang: and on its roll of present members may be traced the names of Dadbhoy Naoroji, Sir Subramania Aiyer, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Bannerjea, Sir N. G. Chandavarkar and, finally, the name of one who in time to come will be reckoned as the greatest of them all—G. K. Gokhale. What India owes to them, no one can fully calculate; what India would have been without them, no one dare think! To voice the grievances and proclaim the needs of India's dumb millions, these men of large hearts and acute sensibilities have made the end and aim of their lives. Their anxiety for the sacred cause they have at heart knows no bounds and finds expression on the most trivial occasions. "For God's sake," implored Mr. D. E. Vatcha one day of one of the members of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, who ventured to treat lightly the complaints of poor people regarding irregularity in the supply of water, "have some compassion on the poor and don't treat them in the way—the cruel way—you do." This makes pathetic reading; but the little incident accurately epitomises the earnestness and intense humanity of our present-day political leaders. They simply bubble over with superabundance of enthusiasm and redundancy of philanthropic zeal for their less fortunate fellow-men. The same enthusiasm, the same zeal, took by storm the best minds of England in the last century, and it was gradually discovered there, as it will be here, that not infrequently humanity, like "vaulting ambition, . . . o'erleaps itself and falls on the other." The classical instance is the working of the Poor Law at the beginning of the last century. How it aggravated the very malady it was designed to allay, how the industrious poor man was penalised for his thriftiness by being made to provide for the self-pauperised idler, is common knowledge. And so in many other departments of social polity it is now gradually being found out that there is no greater menace to all that is highest in men than the amazing pretensions of the masses, awakened and fostered as they are by the extreme doctrines of the humanitarians. These men uphold the so-called rights of the generality of the people against the aristocracy, the right of the weak against the strong, of the uncouth against the beautiful, of woman against man, of the serf against the lord. This Nazarene view of universal love and brotherhood, containing within itself the most mischievous, the most fatal postulate of EQUALITY, spread like wild fire through Europe after the fall of

Napoleon. For the first time philanthropy became universal, and took in her loving embrace all that was pitiable, unsound, and helpless. The consequence was that there came over Europe a kind of Christian democratic revolution which brought in its train the reign of mediocrity, the command of one not born to command. The rage of the populace was let loose and vented itself in attacks on the lives of their masters. Every bawler received ingenuous homage, and every novelty and stupidity was welcomed with open arms and all that was old and eternally true was cast to the winds. The ethics of the day upheld the negative virtues of family life. Not power was sought, but avoidance of mistakes: not actions that favoured strength, but those that sustained weakness. The ideal was the nurse's work in a hospital, the "unselfish" self-sacrifice of the mother and the child, and the rest of the picture-book virtues of a like order. Thus it was everywhere. Generation after generation was emasculated. Literature lost much of its former virility. Incompetent critics had the say everywhere in parliaments, in ministries, journalism, universities. Collective-Wisdom was enthroned and rule went by polls and not by brains.

Napoleon and Goethe were among the first to foresee the advent of democracy and all the evil it was likely to bring in its train. "The fools!" cried Napoleon, when the Allied Monarchs came back to French soil. "Cannot they see that I have stifled anarchy and revolution, and laboured twenty years to give monarchy a new lease of life? They will see that, after I am gone, theirs will not be the strength to dam the flood, which will sweep them along." The march of events, since those fateful words were uttered, has shown that no oracle ever foretold a deeper truth. To those troubles of the heart, which Rousseau's teaching had quickened in Europe—a philanthropic and educational enthusiasm—Goethe was not merely apathetic but positively hostile. His contempt of the claims of the mob knew no bounds, and he often quoted Epicurus' motto: "What the people *disapproves* must be right." Plutarch relates a story of Phocion, who, like Epicurus, had the poorest possible opinion of the intelligence of the people at large, that when once he gave his opinion to the Athenians, and was met with the general approbation and applause of the assembly, turning to some of his friends, he asked them, "Have I inadvertently said something foolish?" If Phocion had this opinion of perhaps the most cultured populace that we meet with in the history of the world, can we wonder that the kingly and scornful spirit of Goethe should

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have summoned all the resources of the language in order to pour his contempt on the low-browed herd he found around him.

"You clods and clouts,  
You losels and louts,  
The devil wouldn't have you '  
You broad mouthed apers,  
You hagglers and gapers,  
Gape, sell and buy '  
Brutes, to your sty '  
Babies and flunkys,  
Mummers and monkeys,  
No such stuff for me,  
Were it given free !  
Could I but master you,  
Oh, oh, the things I'd do '  
Give you such tousings,  
Give you such lousings !  
Had I men but twenty,  
Mine were all your plenty !"

A contemporary of theirs, Stendhal, was equally severe on the pretensions of the tiny, weak, crafty Liliputians of his time who set about the task of fettering the sleeping Gulliver. He vehemently preached against the modern passionless Code of Decencies and proclaimed that "without Passion there is neither virtue nor vice." This was his persistent theme. Weakness, he argued, knows neither good nor evil, and is too paltry even to do evil. It does not sin, because it cannot ; it tells no lies, for it cannot, it neither robs nor murders, for its courage is no more. Humanity, he maintained, had had so many teeth drawn out by the systems of government, State, tradition and morals, that it was high time to breathe into mankind anew some whit of the divine spark, otherwise a generation of man might come that destroyed nothing but also created nothing ; and this was the fearsome outlook ahead.

In the same vein Stendhal's great successor, Friedrich Nietzsche, proclaimed that "Good is what springeth from strength, and evil what ariseth from weakness." No man was a greater despiser of the preposterous demands of the mob than Nietzsche. "For to-day," cries the great immoralist in perhaps the most illuminating page in his masterpiece, "have the petty people become master : they all preach submission and humility and policy and diligence and consideration and the long *et cetera* of petty virtues

"Whatever is of the effeminate type, whatever originateth from the servile type, and especially the populace-mishmash :—

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*that* wisheth now to be master of all human destiny—O, disgust! Disgust! Disgust!

"*That* asketh and asketh and never tireth: 'How is man to maintain himself best, longest, most pleasantly?' Thereby—are they the masters of to-day.

"These masters of to-day—surpass them, O my brethren—these petty people: *they* are the Superman's greatest danger!

"Surpass, ye higher men, the petty virtues, the petty policy, the sand-grain considerateness, the ant-hill trumpery, the pitiable, comfortableness, the 'happiness of the greatest number'—!

"And rather despair than submit yourselves. And verily I love you, because ye know not to-day how to live, ye higher men! For thus do ye live—best!"<sup>1</sup>

Few philosophers of modern times are less understood than Nietzsche, and no one certainly is more maligned than he. It is the fashion of the day to laugh when a man betakes himself seriously to anything save sport, and so poor Nietzsche is branded a megalomaniac and his "ravings" cast aside. Yet, if we will but condescend to give more than a superficial consideration to his peculiar philosophy, we shall find there is nothing *particularly* peculiar about it. All virile philosophers have attacked with almost equal ferocity the pitiful ravings of rose pink sentimentalism and the frantic, half-amusing struggle of modern democracy to equalise the heaven-made inequalities. Carlyle had the same fear as Nietzsche, that the foolish and the feeble were slowly overcoming the wise and the valiant. "And shall I tell you," asks Carlyle, "which is the one intolerable sort of slavery—the slavery over which the very gods weep? That sort is not rifest in the West Indies: but, with all its sad fruits, prevails in nobler countries. It is the slavery of the strong to the weak; of the great and noble-minded to the small and mean! The slavery of Wisdom to Folly. When Folly all 'emancipated,' and become supreme, armed with ballot-boxes, universal suffrages, and appealing to what Dismal Sciences, Statistics, Constitutional Philosophies, and other Fool Gospels it has got devised for itself, can say to Wisdom: 'Be silent, or thou shalt repent it! Suppress thyself, I advise thee; canst thou not contrive to cease, then?' That also in some anarchic-constitutional epochs has been seen. When, of high and noble objects, there remained, in the market-place of human beings, at length none; and he that could not make guineas his pursuit, and the applause of flunkies his

<sup>1</sup> Thus spake Zarathustra, p. 352

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reward, found himself in such a minority as seldom was "before."<sup>1</sup>

As Nietzsche's hopes were centred in his Superman, so were Carlyle's in his Hero. "But I liken common languid Times, with their unbelief, distress, perplexity, with their languid doubting characters and embarrassed circumstances, impotently crumbling down into ever worse distress towards final ruin;—all this I liken to dry, dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of Heaven that shall kindle it. The great man, with his free force direct out of God's own hand, is the lightning. His word is the wise healing word which all can believe in. All blazes round him now, when he has once struck on it, into fire like his own. The dry, mouldering sticks are thought to have called him forth. They did want him greatly; but as to calling him forth—'— Those are critics of small vision, I think, who cry: 'See, is it not the sticks that made the fire?' No sadder proof can be given by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men. There is no sadder symptom of a generation than such general blindness to the spiritual lightning, with faith only in the heap of barren, dead fuel. It is the last consummation of unbelief. In all epochs of the world's history, we shall find the Great Man to have been the indispensable saviour of his epoch;—the lightning, without which the fuel never would have burnt. The History of the World was the Biography of Great Men."<sup>2</sup> Again, with Nietzsche, Carlyle was unsparing in his contempt of the "deep froth-oceans of Benevolence," "Fraternity," "Emancipation-principle," "Christian Philanthropy," and other most amiable-looking, but most baseless, and in the end baleful and all-bewildering jargon. Finally, like Nietzsche, he takes an extensive survey of social affairs and finds them "in a state of the frightfullest embroilment, and, as it were, of inextricable final bankruptcy, . . ."; and then warns us "to see well that our grand proposed Association of Associations, the UNIVERSAL ABOLITION-OF-PAIN ASSOCIATION, which is meant to be the consummate golden flower and summary of modern Philanthropisms all in one, do *not* issue as a universal 'Sluggard-and-Scoundrel Protection Society.'"

Carlyle, again, was by no means alone in England in his attacks on democracy and sentimentalism. That renowned humanitarian, that great Christian—the man who conceived the idea of modern Utopia in his St. George's Guild, John Ruskin, even he showed no mercy in his denunciations of

<sup>1</sup> "The Nigger Question" (*Miscellaneous*, vol. vii).

<sup>2</sup> *On Heroes and Hero-worship*.

democracy and sentimentalism. "My friends, the follies of modern Liberalism, many and great though they be," said he, "are practically summed in this denial or neglect of the quality and intrinsic value of things. Its rectangular beatitudes, and spherical benevolences,—*theology of universal indulgence*, and *jurisprudence which will hang no rogues*—mean, one and all of them, in the root, incapacity of discerning, or refusal to discern, worth and unworth in anything, and least of all in man; whereas Nature and Heaven command you, at your peril, to discern worth from unworth in everything, and most of all in man."<sup>1</sup> The problem for us, he said, was "that ancient and trite one, 'Who is best man?' and the Fates forgive much,—forgive the wildest, fiercest, cruellest experiments,—if fairly made for the determination of that problem. Robbing and slaying are to be condemned in all circumstances except in fair arbitrament of the question, 'Who is best man?' But if we refuse such inquiry and maintain the sublime principle of Equality—*every man as good as his neighbour*,—if we 'give vote to . . . simple and liberty to the vile,' then our robbing and slaying must be done to find out 'Who is *worst* man?'" On another occasion, when England was on the eve of a great political crisis, he warned his countrymen to beware of "every rascal with a tongue in his head" who will try to make his own stock out of them; and urged them to hate as they would the Devil those who said to them, "Stand up for your rights—get your division of living—be sure that you are as well off as others, and have what they have!—don't let any man dictate to you—have not you all a right to your opinion?—let us have no governors, or fathers—let us be free and alike."<sup>2</sup> And yet I have read over and over again critical asses speak of "the effeminate sentimentality of Ruskin!"

It will be said that these opinions of Carlyle and Ruskin, having been expressed more than a generation back, have now become antiquated. Such is, however, far from being the case. On the contrary, Frederic Harrison and Sir Oliver Lodge maintain that it would be difficult to find any very important question of our time which is not touched or foreshadowed by these two Mid-Victorian sages. Even the most brilliant of our modern writers in England holds very much the same views on democracy and Christian philanthropy. "I do not know whether you have any illusions left," wrote Mr. Bernard Shaw to his friend Arthur Bingham Walkley, "on the subject of education, progress, and so forth. *I have none.* Any

<sup>1</sup> *Fors Clavigera*, i. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Time and Tide*, xxv.

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pamphleteer can show the way to better things; but when there is no will there is no way. My nurse was fond of remarking that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear; and the more I see of the efforts of our churches and universities and literary sages to raise the mass above its own level, the more convinced I am that my nurse was right. *Progress can do nothing but make the most of us all as we are*, and that most would clearly not be enough even if those who are already raised out of the lowest abysses would allow the "others a chance." In his *Revolutionist's Handbook* he maintains that what Cæsar, Cromwell and Napoleon could not do with all the physical force and moral prestige of the State in their mighty hands, cannot be done by "enthusiastic criminals and lunatics." Even the Jews, who, from Moses to Marx and Lassalle, have inspired all the revolutions, have had to confess that, after all, *the dog will return to his vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*; and we may as well make up our minds, says Mr. Shaw, that Man will return to his idols and his cupidities, in spite of all "movements" and all revolutions, until his nature is changed. The main thing, therefore, is to change the nature of the lower masses, since this could never be done; the riff-ruff, in spite of education and social legislation, must remain riff-ruff. And the politician who once had to learn how to flatter kings has now to learn how to fascinate, amuse, coax, humbug, frighten, or otherwise strike the fancy of this riff raff electorate. "And to hand the country over to riff raff," remarks Mr. Shaw, "is national suicide, since riff raff can neither govern nor will let any one else govern except the highest bidder of bread and circuses." We are all now under what Burke called, "the hoofs of the swinish multitude" consequently the need for the Superman is, in its most imperative aspect, a political one.

However much, therefore, Goethe and Shaw, Carlyle and Nietzsche, Ruskin and Stendhal differ in their varied teachings, on these points with which we are immediately concerned they hold opinions singularly alike. All have a complete distrust of the capacity of the democracy to govern a State, or even of forming a judgment on matters of public interest. All are opposed to the rose pink sentimentalism that would insist on making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. And all, again, are agreed that the salvation of a State lies, as has always been the case, in its heroes, Supermen or higher men. The greatest enemy of the higher man is the proletarian democrat, and consequently, if we wish to have the power of the higher man effectively felt in the State we shall have to discourage all

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movements in the State that must ultimately lead the proletariat democrat to presume that he is capable of pronouncing judgment on matters of public interest. Now at last it will be clear why there are certain Indians who, contrary to the accepted opinion throughout the country, will perversely oppose the very principle of Mob Education. Mr. Gokhale may snarl and sneer at us and contemptuously describe us as "those to whom the dignity of man as man was an incomprehensible idea, and who regard the poorer classes as made solely to serve those who are above them. These men hold such views because they know no better." Yes, these men do hold such views because they know no better—*views than theirs propounded.*

Of all the weaknesses with which we human beings are afflicted none is so great, so elusive, so fatal as the ingrained reluctance to see facts face to face. Man will either blind himself to the harsh realities of life, or if this is impossible, will invent a phrase or an euphemism to soften and glide over them; but trick himself out of those harsh realities he must by some means or other. Now "the dignity of man as man" is such a phrase. It is invented by men whose hearts are bursting with humanitarian feelings, to get over the unwelcome fact of Nature that some men are born to command and rule and others to obey and serve. We may fret and fume as much as we like, and characterise this irrepressible fact of Nature as cruel and unjust and inhuman, and call up a thousand other harsh names to smother it, but the fact remains a fact. "My erudite friend," says Carlyle, ministering a gentle rebuke to us, "it is a fact which outweighs a thousand! Sweep away thy constitutional, sentimental, and other cobwebberies; look eye to eye, if thou still have any eye, in the face of this plain reality and fact, 'Thou stronger than I; thou wiser than I; thou king, and subject I. . . .' My friend, I have come to the sad conclusion that slavery, whether established by law, or by law abrogated, exists very extensively in this world, in and out of the West Indies; and, in fact, that you cannot abolish slavery by Act of Parliament, but can only abolish the name of it, which is very little!" We know now that the crusade against chattel slavery in the nineteenth century succeeded solely because chattel slavery was neither the most effective nor the least humane method of labour exploitation; and the world is now feeling its way, as we shall see when we come to speak on Industrial Development, towards a still more effective system which shall abolish the



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freedom of the worker without again making his exploiter responsible for him.

But philanthropic Liberalism cannot bear to look at Fact and Nature, but needs must try to blind itself and others in its all-enveloping delusions. It has sworn not to see that in every phase and act of Nature there is Action and Reaction; that an inevitable dualism bisects Nature, so that each thing is a half and suggests another thing to make it whole; as—light, shade; spirit, matter; man, woman; upper, under; odd, even. The same inevitable dualism pervades the world of thought; love suggests and is completed by hatred; good by evil; *Knowledge by Ignorance.*

Nothing ever can get out of this all-pervading Law of Polarity. It was ordained from the foundations of the world, and will last with the world and longer. Let us, putting all folly and childishness aside, have a clear conception of this immutable law of Nature, so that it may not meet with the same fate as "the dignity of man as man," and remain "an incomprehensible idea."

NATURE IS LIKE A MIGHTY BALANCE HOLDING IN ITS SCALES AN ABSOLUTELY EQUAL QUANTITY OF THE TWO SEEMINGLY OPPOSITE STATES OF THINGS.

For every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess. Every sweet hath its inevitable bitter; and every bitter its inevitable sweet. For every grain of wit, there is a corresponding grain of folly, and for every grain of folly, there is a compensating grain of wit. For everything we have missed, we must necessarily gain something in return; and for everything gained, we must necessarily lose something in turn. We know more certainly every day that whatever appears to us harmful in the universe has some beneficent or necessary operation; that the storm which destroys a harvest brightens the sunbeams for harvests yet unsown, and that the volcano which buries a city preserves a thousand from destruction. But it would be calamitous were we to dwell all the time on "the good which is wrought out of all evil" and forget to draw lessons from its opposite—THE EVIL WHICH IS WROUGHT OUT OF ALL GOOD. This is exactly the fatal mistake of our educational faddists. "It is mortifying to the pride of human wisdom," says Lord Jeffrey, "to consider how much evil has resulted from the best and least exceptional of its boasted institutions—and how those establishments which have been most carefully devised for the repression of guilt or the relief of misery, have become themselves the fruitful and pestilent sources both of guilt and

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misery in a frightful and disgusting degree. Laws, without which society could not exist, become, by their own multiplication and refinement, a snare and a burden to those they were intended to protect, and let in upon us the hateful and most intolerable plagues of pettifogging chicanery and legal persecution. Institutions for the relief and prevention of poverty have the effect of multiplying tenfold—hospitals for the cure of diseases become centres of infection. The very police which is necessary to make our cities habitable, give birth to the odious vermin of informers, thief catchers, and suborners of treachery—and our prisons, which are meant chiefly to reform the guilty and secure the suspected, are converted into schools of the most atrocious corruption, and dens of the most inhuman torture." If this be the fate of the best and least exceptionable of our boasted institutions, there is no reason for supposing that Nature will alter her law in the case of the latest of these institutions. The law of polarity will prevail just as certainly in mass education as it has in courts of law and hospitals, poor-relief and prisons. What makes the history of human benevolence a most pathetic reading is the childish nervousness of the great humanitarians to face this law. With an innocence, as delightful as touching, they believe that by the mechanical action of Evolution and by the conscious well-directed thoughts, words and deeds of good and pious men, Evil in some far-off age would be ultimately wiped off the face of the world, leaving behind good and good alone, and then the New Era—the long-expected Year One of Perfect Human Felicity will commence. They already see on the distant, luminous horizon the vision of the Coming Race, and with Browning sing rapturously of it:—

"Progress is"

The law of life, man is not Man as yet !  
Nor shall we deem his object served, his end  
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,  
While only here and there a star dispels  
The darkness, here and there a towering mind  
O'erlooks its prostrate fellows : when the host  
Is out at once to the despair of night,  
*When all mankind alike is perfected,*  
*Equal in full-blown powers*—then, not till then,  
We say, begins man's general infancy."

This pious nonsense—"When all mankind alike is perfected, equal in full-blown powers"—nowadays passes off for profound wisdom, this craven fear of facing facts stands out as the robust optimism of a healthy mind ! Still, this is the cherished belief of all pious men—the hope and consolation of the most devout

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*could be dispensed with*; that he will not take the one with the other; that he would fain obliterate and erase the specific character of a thing, of a circumstance, of an age, and of a person, by calling only a portion of their qualities good, and suppressing the remainder. The 'desirability' of the mediocre is that which we others combat: their ideal is something which shall no longer contain anything harmful, evil, dangerous, questionable, and destructive. We recognise the reverse of this: that with every growth of man his other side *must* grow as well; that the highest man, if such a concept be allowed, would be that man who would represent *the antagonistic character of existence* most strikingly, and would be its glory and its only justification . . ."<sup>1</sup>

I am fully aware that the amiable "Idealists" who are enthusiastic about the good, the true and the beautiful would most solemnly pronounce against this definition of Nietzsche's of the highest man as in the highest degree dangerous and prejudicial to the progress and well-being of mankind. I am also aware that a thing could be *true*, although it were in the highest degree dangerous and undesirable; indeed, the fundamental constitution of existence might be such that one succumbed by a full knowledge of it—so that the strength of a mind might be measured by the amount of "truth" it is capable of enduring—or, to speak more plainly, by the extent to which it required bitter truth attenuated, veiled, sweetened and even falsified to make it palatable.

The more I meditate on the great law of Polarity and deduce certain unwelcome facts of life which inevitably follow from it, the more I realise the truth of those memorable words of Nietzsche. For instance, that Nature having to maintain an eternal balance between good and evil, there can be *no* Progress; nor, on the other hand, can there be Retrogression. Increase the pace of one, and the other must simultaneously increase with it. Long ago Henry George pointedly stated that amid the greatest accumulations of wealth, men die of starvation; and proved that material progress does not merely fail to relieve poverty, but actually produces it; and said that "the association of Poverty with Progress is the great enigma of our times."<sup>2</sup> Had Henry George sufficiently known the law of Polarity, the association of Poverty with Progress would no longer have been an enigma to him but a plain and simple working of that eternal law. Accelerate the pace of one and simultaneously the pace of the other is

<sup>1</sup> *The Will to Power*, vol. ii. § 881.

<sup>2</sup> *Progress and Poverty*.

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• accelerated. With every increase in the accumulation of riches there is a corresponding increase in the burdens of poverty. Every addition to the means of luxury means a fresh addition to the causes of destitution. Men of business, who rarely know the meaning of the word "rich," would naturally call this line of argument vain sophistry; while every tyro in political economy would dismiss it as based on one of the most elementary of economic fallacies. The fact nevertheless remains that the word "rich" is a relative term. Men nearly always speak and write as if riches were absolute, and it were possible, by following certain scientific precepts, for everybody to be rich. Whereas riches are a power like that of electricity, acting only through inequalities or negations of itself. Electricity all at one level or potential has no power whatever, it can do nothing. To get work out of it, it must be allowed to flow from a place of high to a place of low potential. Elevation of some portion confers energy. Depression of another portion equally confers energy. Consequently the greater the difference, the greater the power of electricity, and likewise the greater the inequality, the greater the power of riches. The force of the rupee I have in my pocket depends wholly on the default of a rupee in my neighbour's pocket. If he did not want it, it would be of no use to me; the degree of power it possesses depends accurately upon the need or desire he has for it—and the art of making myself rich, in the ordinary mercantile economist's sense, is therefore equally and necessarily the art of keeping my neighbour poor. These conclusions, I know, do not tally with the easy assumptions of our modern political economists who are bent on making *everybody rich at nobody's expense*; still, I fancy, they will bear looking into as long as the law of polarity continues to act in our daily round of life.

• Likewise we have long been enchanted by the word "progress." It is time the bubble of Progress was pricked. "The mere transformation of institutions, as from military and priestly tyranny to commercial and scientific dominance, from commercial dominance to proletarian oppression; from slavery to serfdom, from serfdom to capitalism; *from general illiteracy to general literacy*, from romance to realism, from realism to materialism, from materialism to mysticism; from polytheism to monotheism, from monotheism to atheism, from atheism to pantheistic humanitarianism; from the ancient Syrian Mammon worship to the modern American Dollar worship," are all, says Bernard Shaw, *but changes from Tweedledum to Tweedledee*. We read the satires of our

fathers' contemporaries and we conclude that the abuses exposed by them are things of the past, when one morning we are awakened from our self-induced trance by a telegram from the most civilised and go-ahead country in the world that a negro for assaulting a white woman was dipped in kerosene oil and made a bonfire of by a crowd of respectable, law-abiding, virtuously indignant citizens—disciples of Him who proclaimed "Resist not evil: . . . Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." We become conscious of an evil, we remedy it and straight-off assume that we have made an advance, all the time forgetting that most of the evils we see are, after all, degenerated good, and are the effects of long-unnoticed retrogression. Take, for example, the institution of slavery. It is well known that Aristotle held slavery to be necessary and natural, and, under just conditions, beneficial to both parties; and this most eminent of ancient thinkers burning with humanitarian zeal never positively condemned it as most of our sages do at present. Even Euripides, in whom one notes "premature modernism," could not conceive the possibility of abolishing an institution so deeply rooted in the ideas and social conditions of his time. But in later centuries, under the influence of the Christian ideal of brotherhood of man, and more so owing to the intolerable abuses of negro-slavery in America, this once-beneficial institution fell in the estimation of men, passed from the category of good to that of evil, and the traffic came to be condemned by law as a felony. However, "no act of Parliament can abolish slavery itself, it can only abolish the name of it, which is very little:" for slavery, as Carlyle has repeatedly affirmed and as we have discovered in recent years, exists very extensively in this world, though the colour has changed and become brown in Africa and white in Europe.

On the other hand, on the lines along which we are degenerating, good has become evil in our eyes, and is being undone in the name of progress, precisely as evil is undone and replaced by good on the lines along which we are evolving. The modern cry of "Liberty, greater Liberty," indicates the lines along which we are degenerating. Obedience, in which the greatest leaders of men believed, has become evil in our eyes and is being undone in the name of progress, precisely as the doctrine of unrestricted *laissez-faire* is being undone and replaced by socialistic legislation on the lines along which we are evolving. Man's insatiable desire to glorify his own doings will always lead him to give to the tinkering of his own

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generation an impression of progress and evolution, while in reality it is merely re-adjustment or re-arrangement, re-distribution or reintegration, or at most renovation. Comparing the ancient scriptures and classics that have come down to us, we find no real ground for the belief that any moral or intellectual progress has been made in recorded time, in spite of all the romantic efforts of historians to reconstruct the past on that assumption. Within that time it has happened to nations as to private families and individuals, remarks Bernard Shaw, "that they have flourished and decayed, repented and hardened their hearts, submitted and protested, acted and reacted, oscillated between natural and artificial sanitation (the oldest house in the world, unearthed the other day in Crete, has quite modern sanitary arrangements), and rung a thousand changes on the different scales of income and pressure of population, firmly believing all the time that mankind was advancing by leaps and bounds because men were constantly busy."

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we invent and impose upon our fellows, of whom we take the best and strongest from their youth upwards, and tame them like young lions,—charming them with the sound of the voice, and saying to them, that with equality they must be content, and that the equal is the honourable and the just. But if there were a MAN who had sufficient force, he would shake off and break through, and escape from all this; *he would trample under foot all our formulas and spells and charms, and all our laws which are against nature*: the slave would rise in rebellion and be lord over us, and the light of natural justice would shine forth." And after considerably over two thousand years, perhaps the greatest leader of thought in England makes a memorable statement, which after all is a repetition, and a feeble one, of the closing words of Calicles:—"that the Superman will snap his superfingers at all Man's present trumpery ideals of right, duty, honour, justice, religion, even decency, and accept moral obligations beyond present human endurance, is a thing that contemporary Man does not foresee." What wonderful "progress" in thought we have made since Plato's time!

We move under the belief that the spread of education and humanitarian ideals among the mob for well-nigh half a century must surely have softened their elemental passions and bestial ferocity; when, lo! one morning Reuter wires to us from the world's centre of refined society, that the police had the greatest difficulty in preventing the mob from tearing into pieces Bonnot, one of the gang of motor-miscreants, and were compelled to abandon the body of the noted anarchist Dubois, "which the mob trampled upon, *dancing and yelling with delight*." I have searched in vain through the two volumes of Stanley's *In Darkest Africa* to find an instance to match this, and I believe one would have to look up the records of "the Grand Custom" of the Dahomeans and "the ju-ju house" rite of the Bonny Cannibals for parallel instances. Surely men who have been shouting *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* for the last hundred years, might have been expected to remember so much of their invincible *-tés* as to know that Dubois might possibly lay claim to be included in the last of them, and if death sealed all quarrel, most surely it did in the case of one's brother, however misguided he may have been.

"Enough, then, of this goose-cackle about Progress:" impatiently remarks Mr. Bernard Shaw. "Man, as he is, never will nor can add a cubit to his stature by any of its quackeries, political, scientific, *educational*, religious, or artistic. . . . The few voices which will still, as always before, exhort them to

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do something else and be something better, might as well spare their breath to cool their porridge (if they can get any). Men like Ruskin and Carlyle will preach to Smith and Brown for the sake of preaching, just as St. Francis preached to the birds and St. Anthony to the fishes. But Smith and Brown, like the fishes and birds, remain as they are; and poets who plan Utopias and prove that nothing is necessary for their realisation but that Man should will them, perceive at last, like Richard Wagner, that the fact to be faced is that Man does not *effectively* will them."

So on both theoretical and practical grounds we see that here never was and never could be any all round progress, nor, on the other hand, any all round retrogression, but an Eternal Recurrence and Readjustment of all things, which we, in our simplicity, believe to be steady progress and irresistible evolution.

Similarly, Knowledge and Ignorance will ever alternate. No amount of literacy will ever dispel innate ignorance nor, on the other hand, will complete illiteracy ever be a hindrance to the acquirement of knowledge. This needs to be particularly remembered, for it is ordinarily believed that literacy is only another term for knowledge and illiteracy for ignorance. "Even if the advantages of an elementary education," remarks Mr. Gokhale, "be put no higher than a capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy is better than illiteracy any day." Is literacy always better than illiteracy for all and sundry, irrespective of their mental capacity? A generation back, under the new-born zeal for universal education, there could have been but one answer, that it was unquestionably so; but of late, after forty years' experience, there have risen in certain quarters grave doubts on the subject. The well-known physician and President of the British Medical Association, Sir J. Barr, at a meeting of the Liverpool branch of the Eugenics Education Society, strongly condemned the modern stupidity of educating every boy and girl in the "three R's," regardless of their natural fitness. In his extended practice and long experience, Sir J. Barr came across quite a number of boys who might have been of use to themselves and to society had their hands been turned to some manual work from their childhood; but their natural torpor of wholesome dulness being disturbed by provocations and punishments, what little intelligence they possessed was driven out by the time they left school, "and they soon found their way to the lunatic asylums." Sir J. Barr is by no means the first to protest against the "three



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R's." A good many years ago, the late Prof. Hodgson of Edinburgh published an appeal against *The Over-estimate of the 'Three R's'* in the English educational system. And long before him, at the very time of the passing of the English Educational Code, which made the three R's the be-all and end-all of elementary education, Ruskin despised and relegated them to a very subordinate place in his own schools of St. George's Guild. "I do not choose," he wrote, "to teach (as usually understood) the three R's. I do not care that St. George's children, as a rule, should learn either reading or writing, because there are very few people in this world who get any good by either. Broadly and practically, whatever foolish people *read*, does *them* harm; and whatever they *write* does other people harm." One of the lady-companions of the Guild ventured to promise the teaching of the three R's, upon hearing which Ruskin wrote to her privately, asking with some indignation whether she had never read his injunctions to the contrary: to which she answered that "inspectors of schools now required the three R's imperatively." Ruskin was beside himself with anger, and answered her "with indignation at high pressure that ten millions of inspectors of schools collected on Cader Idris should not make him teach in his schools, come to them who liked, a single thing he did not choose to." And yet the Hon. Mr. Gokhale maintains that literacy (*i.e.* the teaching of the three R's) is better than illiteracy any day. And he is unquestionably right and Mr. Ruskin is necessarily wrong, for Mr. Gokhale has the collective-wisdom of all the school inspectors of all the world on his side, and in our democratic days "Count of Heads" is the Divine Court of Appeal on every question and interest of mankind.

The various Mohammedan Associations that exist in this country have of late been busy passing resolutions in support of Mr. Gokhale's Bill. I cannot understand their support, unless I choose to believe that they have forgotten that their great Prophet confessed—nay, even gloried in, the fact of his being illiterate. As to acquired learning, remarks Mr. Sale, it is admitted Mohammed had none at all. He had no other education than what was customary in his tribe, who neglected and perhaps despised what we call literature. He could neither read nor write, and his followers, "instead of being ashamed of their master's ignorance, glory in it as an evident proof of his divine mission, and scruple not to call him (as he is indeed called in the Koran itself) <sup>1</sup> the illiterate prophet." Nor can I

<sup>1</sup> "Say, O men, Verily I am the messenger of God unto you all: unto him belongeth the kingdom of heaven and earth; there is no God but he;

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understand the vehement clamour of the Maharattas that Elementary Education is indispensable for the regeneration of their Motherland, when the great regenerator of their people, Sivaji, not only could not sign his own name, but, says James Douglas, in his well-known *Bombay and Western India*, "disliked writing and writing-men, like Lord Lake—

‘Damn your writing,  
Mind your fighting.’”<sup>1</sup>

And it may be questioned how an illiterate man like Mohammed could produce a book which "is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of language . . . and is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue." And it may be further questioned how a man born in such mean circumstances that his whole substance consisted but of five camels and one Ethiopian slave, could come to possess such a hold on the hearts of men as to make Arwa Ebn Masud, prince of the tribe of Thakif, remark that "he had been at the courts both of the Roman emperor and of the king of Persia, and never saw any prince so highly respected by his subjects as Mohammed was by his companions."

This miracle, as all others of a like nature, may be explained on the principle of that sadly-forgotten doctrine of ancient India—the great and eternal doctrine of INVOLUTION. It declares the manifest truth that "all growth is a growth from within outwards," and that all evolution is only a manifestation of preceding involution. The child is the man involved; and the man is the child evolved. The seed is the tree involved; and the tree is the seed evolved. Scientists tell us we can only get as much energy out of a machine as we have put into it in the form of coal and water, and not a particle more. It was for this reason that Mr. Balfour, speaking on the modern Representative System before the Royal Sociological Society, had to admit that "we have gradually had to learn that you cannot get out of human beings, however you may distribute and re-distribute them, more than they have got in them." Mohammed had the seed of a prophet involved in him, and so, overcoming all opposition and adverse circumstances, he grew, or evolved, into a prophet. There was no power on earth that could have stayed his growth or deprived him of prophethood. Mohammed is by no means a solitary instance of this law. All

he giveth life, and he causeth to die. Believe therefore in God and his apostle, the illiterate prophet, who believeth in God and his word; and follow him, that ye may be rightly directed."—Sale's *Al Koran*, chap. vii.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 340.

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history is a standing witness of this eternal fact. Who was Giotto, the great painter, sculptor and architect, but a shepherd-boy tending his father's cattle on a hill near Fiesolè? Who was Turner, the greatest landscape painter the world has ever seen, but the son of a barber in Maiden Lane? Who was Heine, the great German poet, but the son of a half-starved weaver in Saxony, who lived in a poor comrade's garret, with the floor for his bed and two folios for a pillow; and who, while editing the *Tibullus*, had to gather pease-cods on the streets and boil them for his dinner? Who was Napoleon but the son of an unknown Corsican lawyer, whose fortunes were once in such desperate condition that he thought of keeping a cabriolet to earn his living? Take the highest instance: who was Christ but the son of a carpenter? Or, to go to humbler men, who was John Burns? Why go outside of India? Do we not know that our Grand Old Man had to study by the street-lamp at night, just as those illustrious men,

“Lovers of truth, by penury constrained,  
Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon, read  
Before the doors or windows of their cells  
By moonshine through mere lack of taper light.”

And who was Gokhale? What has made him the greatest Indian living? Was it his obscure professorship at Fergusson College and the handsome salary of Rs. 50 he enjoyed there, or was it the gradual and unrestrainable growth of the seed of greatness that was involved in him from the hour of his birth which evolved in defiance of all adverse circumstances? “Nothing stops the development of a man of talent,” says a character in a novel of Champleury’s, “neither misery nor illness, neither false advice nor bad teaching. We are surrounded by bores, imbeciles, traitors, and cowards; if we are strong we ought to overcome all these enemies. If we have not courage, that is to say a profound conviction of art, we succumb: so much the worse, there is nothing to be said. We are not victims, we were not worthy to add to art, and we have entered by mistake into this grand, rugged road that leads to honour and glory. One is gifted, or one is not.” By an irrevocable ordinance the mental rank of a prince or a peasant is fixed from the hour he was born. No manner of effort, no system of culture, can add one particle to the granted ounces of his available brains, and no circumstances, however adverse, can cheat him out of his preordained greatness. Nay, difficulties and obstacles thrown in his path serve but to draw out the

<sup>1</sup> Woodworth’s *Novels*, p. 11.

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latent fire and fury of the overmastering soul, just as the dead trunk of a tree lying across a mountain-torrent serves but to reveal the wild impetuosity of its otherwise placid surface. Half the beauty of that grand elegy of Gray's is lost by the entirely false philosophy contained in the words: "mute, inglorious Milton." There never were, nor could there ever be mute, inglorious Miltons. One has only to read the life of Milton to disabuse one's mind of this cant. His poverty and blindness, his peculiar political and religious creed, were all pressing round him to smother and crush him; but there was something heroic in him—something essentially irrepressible which cried out for expression and which ultimately overcame the fate of dying mute and inglorious. Even prison walls have toppled down before the invincible spirits of Cervantes and Bunyan; and instances of Burns, Carlyle, Clive, Tukaram, Sankaracharya, and a hundred others may be cited to prove the absurdity of Gray's philosophy, and the futility of the hope that is the outcome of that philosophy:—that in the not quite distant future, when the State provides educational facilities for all, Miltons will not die, as they do at present, mute and inglorious, nor will hearts that were once pregnant with celestial fire remain cold, nor hands inert that might have swayed the rod of empire or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

"Admitted," says the education-faddist; "but the experience of every civilised nation of the world has been that elementary education has raised the intellectual status of the nation as a whole. Can that fact be denied?" No, not apparently. But let us look a little deeper into facts. It was said of old that the quality of a tree is best judged by the quality of the fruit it bears<sup>1</sup> and no saying is truer. For a fruit-tree may have a very luxuriant growth of leaves and flowers, but if it does not produce fruit in the end, the luxuriance of its foliage and the loveliness of its flowers are, after all, of little or no value. So also with the intellect of a race. the mind of the nation may be well stored with useful facts, and its upper classes may even be highly cultured, but if these do not end in the production of memorable works in art and literature, science and philosophy, the seeming intellectual progress of that nation is, after all, of no real and permanent value. Can modern Greece with its educated masses and its cultured nobility bear comparison with Greece of the age of Pericles and Phidias? Will anyone venture to maintain this? Or modern Italy with Italy of the age of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 16-20.

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Horace and Augustus, or that of Dante and Michael Angelo? Or modern Germany with Germany of the time of Goethe and Schiller? Or modern India with India of Valmiki and Kalidasa? Or modern England with the England of the time of Shakespeare and Bacon? But why need we go for comparison to England of the time of Shakespeare and Bacon? Take our own times and compare the intellectual status of England before the much-belauded Education Act, and of England of the present moment with more than forty years of mass-education. Take any department of art and literature, science and philosophy. Take Poetry. Whom have we to put side by side with Tennyson, the Brownings, and Swinburne, except Arnold, Kipling, and the great laycate, Alfred Austin? Take Art. Who can be compared to Holman Hunt, Millais and Rossetti? Take Science: can any of our Balls, Lodges, and Schafers dare to stand by Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer, not to speak of Wallace and Hooker? Take Fiction: we might possibly compare Caine and Corelli with Kingsley and Eliot, but who would think of comparing them with Dickens, Lytton, or Thackeray? Take general Literature: would Wells, Chesterton, or even Shaw dare to approach within measurable distance of Carlyle or Ruskin? England produced giants when a great part of her people was groping in the darkness of illiteracy, and now when she has emerged in broad daylight with two generations of her people educated she can produce only comparative pigmies. But, giants or pigmies, this at least is certain, that education in general, and especially mass education, has hardly anything to do with the real intellectual status of a nation. Need we therefore be frightened out of our wits by being repeatedly told that ninety-four per cent. of our people are illiterate? Need we attach any value to the statement dinned into our ears *ad nauseam* that the whole experience of the civilised world is that the intellectual status of a nation is raised by elementary education? What has really happened is not so much that the people have been raised intellectually, as that culture and refinement have been popularised by being made accessible to all and sundry. But popularisation inevitably ends in *vulgarisation*; and if I were asked to point out the most distinguishing feature of modern civilisation, I would not trace it in its great mechanical impulses, nor in its rapid scientific development, nor in its general material progress, as in its VULGARISATION of all the sanctities of life. The Bible, which once could only be possessed by months and years of patient labour in transcribing it, could now be had for the wages of an hour's work of the most unskilled labourer. 1

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uncharitably it was he, and yet he in the most unmistakable terms pronounced a part of humanity as no better than dogs and swine. What pain and sorrow it must have meant to a highly-strung nature like his, we can never even remotely imagine, and yet he who had proclaimed himself "the truth" must "bear witness unto the truth, and every one that is of the truth heareth his voice." But the spurious Christian sentimentality of our day gives the lie to the truth of Christ by refusing to recognise the immeasurable inequalities of intelligence and morality: and when I talk of these "dogs" and "swine" to my friends, and the impossibility, and even the danger, of reclaiming them, my friends have literally recoiled from me, as most of my readers are likely to do. But I have seen enough of the world to know that our deepest insight must and should appear as follies, and under certain circumstances even as crimes, when they come unauthorisedly to the ears of those who are not disposed and predestined for them. It was for this reason that the ancient schools of philosophy among the Indians, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, and even Mussulmans had two divisions, the exoteric and the esoteric. The latter never committed its philosophy to paper, and its store of knowledge was carefully guarded from the swinish and untrained hearers and only given to selected pupils "from mouth to ear." This principle of exo- and esoterism holds good through every stratum of society, and when you come to the lowest stratum of the mob and the proletariat you must carefully guard the secret of reading and writing from them lest "they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you."

Herein lies the great danger of vulgarisation! For it not only leads to the debasement of precious things, but turns those very things into weapons for attacking the very persons who put them in possession of them. Here is Mr. Thomas, a carpenter by profession, hailing from —ham. At a public meeting he gets up, amid the applause of his educated audience, and addresses them on church-going. There were many reasons to Mr. Thomas's mind why the working classes did not attend places of worship: one was, that "the parson was regarded as an object of reverence. In the little town he came from, if a poor man did not make a bow to the parson he was a marked man. This was, no doubt, wearing away to a great extent" (the base habit of making bows), "because the poor man was beginning to get education, and to think for himself. It was only while the priest kept the press from him that he was kept ignorant, and was compelled to bow, as it were, to

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the parson. . . . It was the case all over England. The clergyman seemed to think himself something superior (laughter). Now he (Mr. Thomas) did not admit there was any inferiority (hear, hear), except, perhaps, on the score of his having received a classical education, which the poor man could not get . . ."

Here is the most dangerous element of modern popular education!—this spirited refusal of the "educated" Mr. Thomas to pay respect to anybody or to acknowledge anybody as in any way superior to himself, and his burning desire to drag down to his own level all who stand higher than himself. The inevitable consequence of developing such modes of thought in the lower orders is that they lose their habit, and at last their faculty, of respect—lose, in fact, the very capability of *reverence*, which is the most precious part of the human soul. "A man's happiness consists," truly remarks Ruskin, "in-  
finitely more in admiration of the faculties of others than in confidence of his own. Reverent admiration is the perfect human gift in him; all lower animals are happy and noble in the degree they can share it. A dog reverences you, a fly does not; the capacity of partly understanding a creature above him is the dog's nobility. Increase such happiness in human beings, and you increase daily their happiness, peace, and dignity, take it away, and you make them wretched as well as vile. But for fifty years back modern education has devoted itself simply to the teaching of *Impudence*; and then we complain that we can no more manage our mobs."<sup>1</sup>

Again, it is abundantly clear from Mr Thomas's speech that the people do not desire education for education's sake, but because they believe that when they have got it they must become upper orders. Hitherto, this has been the real cause of failure in all attempts at mass education—that there is no honest desire for the thing itself. "There is a strange notion in the mob's mind nowadays (including all our popular economists and educators, as we most justly may, under the brief term 'mob')," says Ruskin, "that *everybody* can be uppermost; or, at least, that a *state of general scramble*, in which everybody in his turn should come to the top, is a proper Utopian constitution; and that, once give every lad a good education, and he cannot but come to ride in his carriage (the methods of supply of coachmen and footmen not being contemplated). And very sternly I say to you—and say from sure knowledge—that a man had better *not* know how to read and write than receive education on such terms. The first condition under which it

<sup>1</sup> *Fors Clavigera*, vol. I.

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can be given usefully is, that it should be clearly understood to be no means of *getting on* in the world, but a means of *staying pleasantly in your place* there."<sup>1</sup>

Who would be so bold as to assert that the present hubbub for mass education in India is *not* mainly for the very purpose which Ruskin so unequivocally denounces? Who is so simple as to believe that the lower orders in India desire education as a "means of staying pleasantly" in the place in which they are born, and not to get a chance of "getting on" in a state of general scramble? And who would dare to deny that this motive of getting on at all costs, bad as it is in any part of the world, is calculated to work greater mischief in India on account of the peculiar organisation of its society?

Later on we shall examine a little closely this characteristic organisation of India; for the present let us turn from the purely theoretical to a more practical aspect of the main question. For such a treatment of the subject it would be convenient to divide India roughly into rural and urban districts. Now let us cast a passing glance at the present state of voluntary elementary education in both these divisions. As far as the urban districts are concerned, I believe it would be difficult to find a town through the length and breadth of India so small and thinly populated or so poor and decayed that it has not even one elementary vernacular school in it, and consequently for all practical purposes we might say that voluntary elementary education prevails in all the urban districts of India. The fee is so nominal—being in most cases *two annas*—that even the poorest of the poor working-men, if he cared to, could give elementary education to his child. And nothing surprises one more than to find on inquiry that it has spread in quarters least suspected by the casual observer; in fact, it is taken advantage of by the sons of every class of people in the town—from the small stall-holders and petty artisans to mill-hands and domestic servants and even coolies. The children that are as a rule kept out are those of *bhungees*, *mangs*, *mahars*, *chamars*, *hajams*, and of the unsettled day-labourer. When we turn to rural districts, the question seemingly assumes a different aspect, and facilities for elementary education in those districts are apparently deplorable. As is generally known, every four out of five villages in India are without even a semblance of a school-house, and as the population of India is mostly spread over the vast, sweeping plains of its rural districts, Mr. Gokhale's illiterate ninety four per cent. mainly come from these districts, and, as one would expect,

<sup>1</sup> *Time and Tide*, xiv.



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are almost entirely composed of *ryots*, or agriculturists. Consequently, laying aside for the nonce the fascinating academical glamour of the question, and bringing it into a narrow and more intelligible compass, we find that Mr. Gokhale's Bill will in the end mainly affect the intellectual development of *ryots*, *dheds*, *chamars*, *mahars*, *hajamis*, *mungs*, *bhungees*, *et hoc genus omne*.

Thus stands the mighty Problem of India when brought down from its mystic wonderland of Fantasy into the small prose domain of Sense! On the intellectual development of this still unrecognised gentry of *ryots*, *mahars* and *hajamis* depends, as the Gaekwar would say, "the moral, political and industrial progress of India." Nay, the very destiny of India rests on the intellectual development of Pandus and Ragus, of Somlas and Domlas. "If we take up the question in the right spirit," solemnly declared Mr. Gokhale, "and persevere with it as we should, we shall have ensured the future of our country. If, on the other, we continue to neglect it, as we have been doing all these years, we may talk of national progress as much as we choose, we shall not be able to achieve it till the crack of doom."

This most noble and inspiring admonition of our great leader is quite in keeping with the wisdom of our glorious age which, while it leaves the vine to trail as it lists and the fig to spread as it chooses, is mightily busy in training and tending the thorn and the thistle, for it believes, by the unswerving march of the Law of Creative Evolution—men shall gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles.

Making all allowance for the extravagance of language—so natural in a public address—this much is clear: that Mr. Gokhale positively lays down that "all national progress" is *really* bound up with the education in the three R's of certain classes of Indian people which for most of their practical needs of life are not required to read, write and reckon. "The attitude of the agriculturists towards education is one of stolid indifference," wrote the *Civil and Military Gazette* a few months back. "In many parts of the Punjab he shows no inclination to be hustled. In spite of all the fuss which is being made around him, echoes of which must reach him, in spite, too, of all facilities, the proportion of pupils who are the sons of agriculturists remained about a half, as before." The Inspector of schools in Rohtak and Hissar reported lately that among the agriculturists "tending cattle is preferred to education." The same complaint comes from the United Provinces that lower primary education is "unpopular with

the villagers because of its evanescent character." Commenting on this, the general Report says:—"This peculiarity of lower primary education is worth remembering at a time when the cry for the rapid extension of primary education is resounding through the land. It is not easy to see how India would benefit by a sudden diffusion of spurious literacy."

Far from benefiting India, a sudden diffusion of spurious literacy would do her positive harm should the lowest classes once come to realise that it was a splendid instrument for artificially raising their low station in life. For it would be idle to suppose that they could ever desire education for the sake of education so that they may remain pleasantly in the situation in which God has placed them. One day I happened to ask my *malee* (gardener) as to why he sent his son to school, for surely, I said, he would have to take up his father's occupation when he grew up. "No, no," he replied, "*malipanamadi kai pot-bhurtê?*" (in gardener's occupation can the belly be filled?). "My son shall be a postal peon, where he stands a chance of earning twenty to thirty rupees." The same question I put to my *hajam* (barber) when he told me he intended giving rudimentary English education to his son. "Oh, no," he replied smilingly, "I shall never let my son take up my *hulka dhundha* (low occupation), but I will use my influence with one of my *sahibs*, and secure for him the post of a petty clerk somewhere."

Nothing would be more dangerous, with the organisation of society such as we have, than the awakening in the mind of the mob a desire for a state of general scramble. For, if with my *hajam*, the *bhungees*, *mangs* and *mahars* came to understand the degrading nature of the work they are at present uncomplainingly and even cheerfully doing, they would be more than human if they did not protest against the apparent injustice of a system which casts them and their children for ever to be the sweepers and scavengers of the classes above them, and if they did not try to improve their lot by obtaining some work which would raise them, however slightly, in the eyes of the world. Now, in the eternal constitution of the world the work set apart for a *hajam* and a *bhunjee*, a *mahar* and a *chamar*, can never be left undone, and one set of men or another must be found to do it. If, therefore, even a small number of men from the lowest castes, obtaining a free elementary education, is able to find some occupation better than theirs, their places will have to be filled up, and can only be filled up by men drawn from castes immediately above them. But will the caste a step higher ever consent to do the

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work of the caste a step lower? Will any sane man even dream of such a thing? Even the lowest castes have such high notions of their descent that a *hajam* would starve rather than do the work of a *mahar* or a *chamar*, and the two last-named gentlemen, far from consenting to do the work of a caste lower than theirs, would think themselves positively polluted if a *mang* or a *bhungee* accidentally touched them. This is no mere conjecture, but a fact that could be ascertained any day; as much as the other fact that the lower castes, whenever they have got the opportunity of educating their sons, have come to despise the *dhundha* to which they are confined by their caste.

Is it political wisdom, is it the foresight of true statesmanship to awaken in the lowest classes desires and ambitions which, as circumstances stand, can never be satisfied, but which must inevitably end in introducing into India the evils under which modern Europe is groaning—social unrest and a feeling of dissatisfaction with one's environments of life? Both, therefore, on theoretical and practical grounds, the fascinating scheme of mass education in the three R's must be given up in India, for while the so-called social, moral and economic advantages are, after all, purely conjectural and extremely problematic, the disadvantages are very real and quite imminent.

“Well, then,” the reader questions me, “are we to leave the masses more or less in the chaotic state in which they at present pass their existence? Must no attempt be made to introduce order and system in the prevailing unsatisfactory condition of Labour?”

Indeed, the Organisation of Labour is the still-unsolved problem of problems before the nations of the world, and with our present industrial development it is already facing us. So if we must have some form of mass education, let it be rather in the direction that would obtain for us a better organisation of labour. This end cannot be more effectively secured than by making, and even compelling, the children of the lower masses to learn the calling by which they are to live. When we thus make the training of youth for the work of his life the end and aim of compulsory elementary education, there is no room for divergence of opinions. Even those who are bitterly opposed to, and laugh to scorn, the three R's, maintain that it is incumbent upon the State to establish training schools in every part of its dominion so that every child born in it may be given some rudimentary instruction whereby he may the more efficiently perform his work in life. “The first condition of education,” remarks Ruskin in a memorable passage, “the thing you are all crying out for, is being put to some wholesome

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*and useful work.* And it is really the last condition of it too; you need very little more."

"Admitting that this is the best form of compulsory mass education, may I ask," the reader goes on to question me, "how are we going to fix upon the calling of a youth?"

This is too complicated a question all over the world for an entirely satisfactory answer; but fortunately in India the problem is solved for all practical purposes by the wonderful organisation of Caste, which irrevocably allots to each individual, at any rate among the lower castes, from the hour of his birth, the work by which he is to make his living. This great initial difficulty being thus happily settled in India, we can without much further trouble establish at first in certain selected spots small training schools and workshops where different arts and crafts may be taught by the most experienced man available in each locality—thus partly meeting for the present the dearth of trained teachers. For instance, in a village the most experienced farmer whose services are available should be given the charge of all the village-boys of a certain age, and he would be expected to make them in a given time fully acquainted with all the simple operations of the art of cultivating the soil. For more than one reason, whenever possible the *patel* of the village should be selected for the post, as I have found from my own personal observations, in countless villages down the long chain of the Western Ghats, that he is invariably the most intelligent man in the village; but what is more, he possesses a certain amount of hereditary influence and power over the village-community, of which no better use could be made than in exacting obedience from his pupils, and Obedience is the basis of all true moral training. Later on it may be arranged that of these boys the most intelligent—preferably the *patel's* son—should be given a scholarship and sent to one of the primary agricultural schools into which the present village schools should be converted wherever they exist. Here he should be taught the three R's and made to undergo a more systematic training in agriculture, and thus be the instrument of introducing a better system of cultivation when he returns to his own village. The results of these rural experiments will give some data for the solution of that difficult question as to how chance of some advancement in life may be extended to those who are naturally gifted, and yet that advancement made compatible with the pursuit of lower avocations.

When we come to urban districts the question becomes a little involved, yet it is capable of some solution on an

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identical principle. We shall take, for instance, the most extensive of modern manufacturing industries—cotton spinning and weaving. Here, by a happy chance, we have an organisation quite ready at hand. There is in most mills a class of boys called "half timers" who, being under fourteen years, could by law only work for half a day. Now, instead of letting these boys loiter about for the rest of the day, could not the educational authorities come to some arrangement with the mill-owners whereby the boys might be given in charge of an experienced "jobber" who would be expected in a given time to take them through a fairly complete course of practical training, from carding to weaving, so that by the time the boys come to be whole day wage earners, they will be efficient mill-hands, competent to do any work that is set to them and able to take some interest in their otherwise monotonous work? Here again some power must be given to the jobber to train the boys up in the habits of obedience and check all incipient truculence, which has, unfortunately, so alarmingly increased among the factory hands all over the world. The most intelligent of the half-timers might be taught the three R's and given an advanced system of training with an idea of turning them eventually into competent jobbers, and one or two showing exceptional ability might even be sent to a technical school.

In a like manner for the sons of carpenters, masons, tailors etc., small joint workshops should be opened in the different parts of the town, where again practical instruction should be imparted by the most experienced carpenter, mason or tailor available, who likewise must be given sufficient authority over his pupils to be able to enforce on them habits of sound and honest work. Similarly, training schools may be opened for the sons of domestic servants such as *malees*, *hamals*, cooks, "boys," coachmen, *dhobies*, and so on through all the lower classes until we come to *mahars*, *chamars* and *bhungees*, who likewise shall have their sons placed under their *havildars* or headmen, who in their own line, being the most experienced workers and being used to exercise authority over their men, are best adapted to teach the boys just what will fit them to do efficiently and obediently and not less cheerfully the work to which they were destined from the hour of their birth.

It will be found in the end, here as well as in the most civilised parts of the world, that a system of training based on the principle of preparing the youth of a country for the work of his life, will more satisfactorily solve the pressing world-problem of the organisation of Labour than the most perfect

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system of education which aims at initiating the lower orders into the mystery of reading, writing and reckoning. "In the education either of the lower or upper classes," justly remarks Ruskin, "it matters not the least how much or how little they know, provided they know just what will fit them to do their work and to be happy in it. . . . A man is not educated, in any sense whatsoever, because he can read Latin or write English, or can behave himself in a drawing-room; but he is only educated, if he is happy, busy, beneficent, and effective in the world: millions of peasants are, therefore, at this moment, better educated than most of those who call themselves gentlemen; and the means taken to educate the lower classes in any other sense may very often be productive of a precisely opposite result."<sup>1</sup>

Let our education faddists lay to heart these wise words of Ruskin. They contain the substance of all possible objections against the fatal system of educating the proletariat in the three R's. Its danger lies in unconsciously cultivating in the lower classes a distaste—no matter to what little extent—for pure manual work. We may be quite sure we shall not draw upon us the wrath of heaven if we set aside for the present the beautiful theory of "the Dignity of Man as Man," but there is another kind of Dignity we dare not treat lightly for a moment without the most fatal consequences—the Dignity of Labour.

This gospel of manual work is now preached everywhere in Europe and America, and is daily receiving increased recognition among well-known educationists and social reformers. It was the central idea in the education of the great Cyrus, who always prided himself on the fact that he never sat down to dinner without having first earned it in the sweat of his brow by exercising himself in some business of war or agriculture. In Fellenberg's celebrated institution at Hofwyl, education was intimately united with, and carried on through, agriculture. And similarly, in Robert Owen's infant schools and philanthropic Communities, in Pestalozzi's educational reforms and in Froebel's Kindergarten system, and in the recent Swedish movement of Otto Salomon, we trace not only a notable effort made to combine harmoniously "hand-work and head-work," but a distinct impetus given to the new and growing creed of purely Manual Instruction, the object being "the acquirement of manual dexterity, exercise of judgment and technical skill,

<sup>1</sup> *The Stones of Venice*, iii., App. vii. This explains why Sir George Birdwood calls those illiterate peasants living in the village communities of Western India, "the most literary peasantry in the world, not excepting those of France and Scotland."

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development of the physique by a progressive series of work from simple to skilled workmanship." Leland, the "Hans Breitmann" of the literary world and a great advocate of practical education, asserts that it is only "by making hand-work a part of every child's education that we shall destroy the vulgar prejudice against work as being itself vulgar." He believes that perhaps half the real suffering in Europe and America is due to not sufficiently identifying education with hand-work. But I believe the modern fetish of knowledge, or the identification of education with the mere acquisition of knowledge, is equally responsible for much of the suffering of the lower orders in Western countries. "The cry for the education of the lower classes which is heard every day more widely and more loudly," remarks Ruskin, "is a wise and a sacred cry, provided it be extended into one for the education of *all* classes, with definite respect to the work each man has to do, and the substance of which he is made. But it is a foolish and vain cry, if it be understood, as in the plurality of cases it is meant to be, for the expression of mere craving after knowledge, irrespective of the simple purposes of the life that now is." A more determined onset was made against this idolatry of knowledge by an advanced and enlightened educationist, Edward Thring, who bade teachers "choose deliberately a large amount of Ignorance and fling omniscience into the common sewer, if ever they mean to be skilled workmen, masters of mind, lords of thought, and to teach others to be skilled workmen. . . . The knowledge-hack and knowledge omnibus business may minister to animated steam engines and to intellectual navvies, but it can never teach life or train souls." I remember reading the story of a board-school girl in America who was remarkably well up in her Geography and Astronomy, yet was unable to answer when asked if the ground in her mother's back-yard was a part of the earth's surface, and, when told it was so, could hardly bring herself to believe it. And from my own personal experience of a class of undergraduates, I can say that a good deal of the knowledge of an average Indian undergraduate is like that of the little American girl.

Be this as it may, it is evident that various objections, both on theoretical and practical grounds, may be urged against any scheme of mass-education that is based on the three R's, so long, and too long, reckoned the all-in-all of popular education. And these objections,—which are day by day growing so weighty as to make me believe I shall live to see the day when England herself will fling the R's into the common sewer,—become altogether fatal in India, where the

organisation of society. Is it therefore at all surprising if certain people in India have read with a mingled feeling of wonder and misgiving the eloquent and convincing—perhaps a little too much so—pronouncements of the great Indian apostle of mob-education. “My Lord,” declaimed Mr. Gokhale in one of his impassioned utterances in the Imperial Council Chamber, “an American legislator addressing his countrymen more than half a century ago, once said that if he had the Archangel’s trump, the blast of which could startle the living of all nations, he would sound it in their ears and say:—‘Educate your children, educate all your children, educate every one of your children.’ The deep wisdom and passionate humanity of this aspiration are now generally recognised, and in almost every civilised country the State to-day accepts the education of the children as a primary duty resting upon it.”

Nobody, surely, can deny the fact that the education of the children is now considered by every civilised nation a primary duty resting upon the State. Nor can any one question either the humanity or the nobility of the aspiration of the American legislator, but one is seriously inclined to question the depth and quality of the wisdom of a policy that advocates the teaching of the youth of India, whether he be Brahmin or Bhungee, the shapes of letters and the tricks of number irrespective of the calling by which he is to live. Apart from the practical and theoretical objections already urged, that policy which sets at defiance the eternal and irrevocable laws of heaven and earth, deserves, I venture to suggest, some other name than wisdom. Perhaps the greatest of these, as I have already mentioned, is the all-pervading Law which imperatively lays down—I had almost said cruelly lays down—that good and evil, Knowledge and Ignorance shall co-exist and shall be co-extensive, and that harmonious order is only possible by the mutual balance of these apparently antagonistic forces. No humanity however passionate, no aspiration however noble, can stay for a moment the perfect, noiseless working of this inexorable law, and all efforts on our parts to upset *the elemental equipoise of nature* will only end in upsetting ourselves and paving a sure way for sorrow and disappointment. In fact, there is no chapter in the history of the world that makes such pathetic reading as the one which deals with the heroic attempts of entirely pious and noble-minded men to set up on earth the Kingdom of Heaven, based on the fatal and cretinous belief of the gradual elimination of Evil from off the face of the world. But their lamentation—almost childish in its helplessness, when they saw the evil, in spite of their thirty,



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• forty or fifty years of strenuous, unrelaxing campaign against it, striding across the world as vigorously and as defiantly as ever—makes still more painful reading, specially when they, like Cardinal Newman, attributed the failure of the best efforts of their life to the opposition of—not bad but—“good men,” or cried out like their protomartyr Stephen—“Ye, stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye.”

What an idea of the omnipotence of the Holy Ghost must these blessed beings possess to suppose, even in passing, the possibility of Its all conquering might being resisted by any set of creatures, human or otherwise !

Leaving this aside, we shall gradually come to realise that Ignorance, any more than Evil, can never be overcome, but that real wisdom and true humanity lie in making the best possible use of it by not letting the natural torpor of wholesome dulness of the lower orders be disturbed by provocations or plagued by punishments. Let us remember the good old homely saying—where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise. Experience will teach us that, after all, deep wisdom and passionate humanity lie more in that well-worn proverb than in the archangelic blast of the American legislator. It is rightly said that, in matters moral, most men are not intended to be any better than sheep and robins ; so, also, in matters intellectual, most men are not intended to be wiser than their cocks and bulls—duly *scientific* of their yard and pasture, happily *nescient* of all beyond.

It was for this reason that Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis, in opposing Mr. Gokhale's Bill, said : “I am against the cardinal principle of the Bill, which is compulsory education. I think that even to the very people for whose benefit the measure is intended compulsory primary education will not prove a blessing.”

• Strangely enough, Mr. Gokhale, after making repeated pronouncements on public platforms to emphasise his settled conviction that all national progress in India was really bound up with the question of mass education, concluded his splendid oration in these memorable words : “My Lord, no one is so simple as to imagine that a system of universal education will end all our ills, or that it will open out to us a new heaven and a new earth. Men and women will still continue to struggle with their imperfections, and life will still be a scene of injustice and suffering, of selfishness and strife. Poverty will not be banished because illiteracy has been removed, and the need of patriotic or philanthropic work will not grow any the less. . . .

## Elementary Education

This Bill thrown out to day will come back again and again, and I am confident that on the stepping-stones of our failures a measure will rise which will at last spread the light of knowledge throughout the land. It may be that this anticipation may not come true. It may be that our efforts may not conduce, even indirectly, to the promotion of the great cause which we all have at heart, and that they may turn out after all to be no better than mere ploughing of the sands of the seashore."

Mr. Gokhale need have no fear on this score. For public agitation, engineered by stump-orators and backed by the clamour of the Press, will in a few years force the hands of Government to pass his Bill. But there is a strange power of prophecy—as mysterious as inexplicable—in the words of wise men which make their words truer and worth more than those men themselves know. So the closing words of Mr. Gokhale will ultimately prove to be quite prophetic when, after modern democratic ideas and amiable imbecility have had their full course and spent their rage, the veil from the eyes of men will be lifted and our efforts for the promotion of human welfare through Universal Mass Education will turn out *after all* to be no better than mere ploughing of the sands of the seashore.

# *CASTE SYSTEM*

"Our character is being unhinged, our divisions and dissensions are being sharpened, our activities for public good are being weakened, our very national existence is being threatened by this demon of CASTE, which has made and is making cowards of us."

CHANDAVARKAR.

"Caste is a monstrous engine of pride, dissension, and shame."

SHERRING.

"The Caste System is at the root of the political slavery of India."

BHANDARKAR.

"Indian Civilisation is the blossom and fruit of the Caste System."

¶

BLUNTSCHLI

"Only by the Order of Castes, the supreme law of life itself is formulated."

NIETZSCHE.

"I believe Caste division to be in many respects the *chef d'œuvre*, the happiest effort, of Hindu legislation. I am persuaded that it is simply and solely due to the distribution of the people into castes that India did not lapse into a state of barbarism, and that she preserved and perfected the arts and sciences of civilisation whilst most other nations of the earth remained in a state of barbarism."

ABBÉ DUBOIS.

## CHAPTER II

### CASTE SYSTEM

AGAIN and again it has been said that the misery and poverty, the superstition and backwardness of India may all be ultimately traced in one way or another to the cruel and entirely unjust character of its social organisation. For the last three-quarters of a century India has been overrun with social reform societies and social reformers. Year in and year out meetings and conferences of these societies and reformers have been held, where speaker after speaker has been unsparing in his denunciations of the wretched system that draws distinctions between one human being and another, and parcels them out into higher and lower castes. "The System which divides us," remarked the Gaekwar a few years ago, "into innumerable castes, claiming to rise by minutely graduated steps from the Pariah to the Brahman, is a whole tissue of injustice, splitting men equal by nature into divisions high and low, based not on the natural standard of personal qualities, but on accidents of birth." Again, it has been urged that, whatever might be the reasons in times gone by for regarding certain of our fellow-men as social outcasts, those reasons had long since disappeared in the altered conditions of the country, and, consequently, there was no justification for perpetuating the distinctions which they had brought into existence. At one of the meetings of the Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association the Hon. Mr. Justice Rao emphatically asserted that the people (of the lower castes) were just as fit and capable of discharging the ordinary duties of life as any one of those who belonged to the privileged classes. He admitted that at present, no doubt, they were in the lowest grade of society, and were in a low state of mental and moral development. "But whose fault is that?" chivalrously asked the learned judge. "Certainly, not theirs. The fault was entirely and wholly of the higher classes, who had done them a grievous wrong by keeping them, generation after generation, under a ban of social exclusion." The Hon. Mr. Parekh, who followed, flourished the Hindu shastras in the face of the audience, and said the attitude taken by the higher classes of Hindus towards their less fortunate brethren

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was not justified by anything they read in their sacred books. Mr. Parekh evidently had not turned up the shastras of late, otherwise it is difficult to understand his astounding statement. Even that *doyen* of Indian scholars—the man whose name is a household word among the Orientalists of the world, Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar—admits that in the olden times, even in the time of the Bhagavad Gita, there were four castes, though, of course, with the rest of the social reformers, he also maintains that under the changed circumstances the Hindu community must gradually do away with all caste-restrictions.<sup>1</sup> Sir N. G. Chandavarkar, who wound up the whole discussion, in his righteous zeal for justice and fair play, put no restraint on himself, called Caste “the Curse of India,” and openly anathematised his community for its unhallowed practices “The Hindu community stands condemned,” solemnly proclaimed the noble-minded judge, “of having neglected one of its greatest duties and carried on its head a load of sins because of the degradation to which it had subjected those whom it called its members, but whom it refused to recognise as being within its respectable fold.”

Any movement led by educated men compels attention, but one that is headed by such great men as Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar and Sir Narayan Chandavarkar deserves the whole-hearted support of even those who have not the privilege to belong to the great Hindu community. In fact, they have succeeded in enlisting the sympathy of broad minded men of other communities, and Christian Missionaries have been striving for many years past to break down the fetters of caste, and of late many large hearted Englishmen and women, with the support of certain high-placed Government officials, have started missions all over the country for ameliorating the condition of the so called “Depressed Classes” by providing them with educational and other facilities. The Hindus themselves have not rested satisfied with mere oratorical efforts, but have organised *samajes* or religious sects, members of which are drawn from all classes of Hindus and are on a footing of absolute equality among themselves. Two of these—the Brahmo Samaj and Arya-Samaj—have had within their fold men whose names shed lustre on the history of their country.

Besides, when we consider that most other communities

<sup>1</sup> All the various theories advanced by scholars on “Caste” are examined by Messrs. Macdonald and Keith in their *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, and they come to the conclusion that while considerable elasticity was permitted, the system of Caste based on heredity was formed and was known in the period of the Rig-Veda.

have not anything like a Caste System at present, and even those that had it but lately, like Japan, have had to give it up as unsuitable to modern conditions of life; when we consider that an "untouchable" Mahar might well take up the cry of oppressed humanity from the mouth of Shylock and with equal justice hurl it in the face of an arrogant Brahmin: "Hath not a Mahar eyes? hath not a Mahar hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Brahmin is?" And finally, when we consider that all the great religions of the world, the Vedas equally with the Gathas, the Bible and the Koran, have held all men as equal in the eyes of the Creator—when we look at the Problem in all these varied aspects a *prima facie* case is most assuredly made out for the immediate dissolution of this most unrighteous system of social organisation.

But strange as it may appear, in spite of its unreasonableness, in spite of the liberal education and growing tolerance of the upper classes, in spite of the scathing denunciations and outspoken self-condemnation of the great leaders of Hindu society—the Caste System, notwithstanding a few individuals and societies, holds practically the same absolute sway over the mind and habits of the people as it did in remote historical times. Whence comes the monstrous vitality of this pernicious system? Are there any unchanging principles rooted deep in human nature to which caste owes its otherwise inexplicable continuance of unimpaired animation? That there must be, goes without saying; though we may fail at this distance of time and change of environment to trace accurately or even to cognise hazily those basic principles. For it is impossible, nay, inconceivable, for any superstructure, social or otherwise, to survive for hundreds and thousands of years without having a strong foundation, consolidated enough to resist and repel the rude shocks of successive foreign invasions and defy the ruthless hand of ever-changing time.

But before we proceed further, I think it is most essential for the right understanding of all Oriental problems to trace to some extent the fundamental differences between the ideals of the East and those of the West. A comparison like this is made all the more necessary when we wish to weigh the merits and demerits of such a hoary institution as the Indian Caste System. For, judging age-worn Eastern questions by a freshly-imported parcel of Western ideals is the bane of modern India which has led many a lofty-minded Englishman—the

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genuineness of whose anxiety for the welfare and advancement of India is unquestionable—and not a few of the most cultured Indians, ever ready to give their best for the honour and glory of their Motherland, to conclusions which are as false as fatal.

Books have been written by missionaries and students of repute, and articles compiled by well-known travellers and Government officials, directly or indirectly bearing on these differences, but though they have succeeded in depicting the picturesqueness of the many-sided East, they have somehow or other invariably failed to enter into its spirit. The form is described, well enough, no doubt; but the life—that is ever missing, that has ever eluded them. They have sometimes approached it near enough, only to confess that it has slipped out of their very grasp. "India is a place of enchantment," remarks Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. "It baffles you: it enthrals you. It is like a lover who plays with your affections. There is something hidden in its heart that you will never know. It is maddening in its imperturbability, in its insistency. You feel insignificant before it, just as a decently-minded prize fighter would feel insignificant before a saint. The difference which separates you from it cannot be bridged. This is characteristic of everything Indian. India centred in the universal is pantheistic and communist; the West centred in the particular is theistic and individualist. The difference is, therefore, in the essential nature of things. Thus, your attempts to understand, thwarted, laughed at, denied every time, become maddening. India eludes you to the last."

So it does, and so it will. What keeps the real East veiled from the gaze of the average Westerner is his innate inability to shake himself free of his own peculiar outlook on life and approach that of the East with a perfectly open mind—so open that he should be capable of receiving impressions diametrically opposed to those to which he is used from his very childhood. And there have been Westerners—men like Jonathan Duncan, Sir Edwin Arnold, Mme. Blavatsky, Edward Carpenter, Pierre Loti, Sir George Birdwood, Annie Besant, Sister Nivedita, and E. B. Havell—who have approached the East in such a receptive frame of mind, and who, having attuned the spirit to that of the East, have succeeded in recording a few fleeting impressions of that all-elusive spirit, only to be cried down by those on whom the soul of the East failed while looking at the Tottenham Court Road furniture of a ruling prince's palace, or the Factory Chimneys in the suburbs of Bombay and Calcutta. Leaving the latter to



meditate over their heaven-soaring monuments, if there is one point which thoughtful Westerners most insistently emphasise, it is that whoever wishes to have more than a superficial notion of India, or, for the matter of that, of the East, must not only get acquainted as closely as possible with *its peculiar religious temperament*, but even let himself be swayed by it. In India religion is not a thing for Sundays merely. "There are no such things as religious things," remarks an eminent English writer; "all things are religious, or else nothing is; there is no middle course. Religion either permeates every thought and act and object of a man's life, or else it never really touches anything in it at all. I hate the cant which sets a boundary between what is religious and what is secular so-called, for unless a man's religion touches everything about him and around him and within him that man's religion is vain." This accurately describes the idea that permeates the inner life of India. Scratch an Anglicised Hindu gentleman about town and you will find the same idea running underneath.<sup>1</sup> Religion is the great motor power of all actions, from house-warming and tree-planting to the daily baths and meals. In work and rest, in sorrow and enjoyment, it plays a prominent part—nay, even the Thugs before starting out on their mission of plunder and murder had the religious rites and prescribed ceremonies of their craft duly performed. "Thuggee was to them not merely a profession," remarks John Kaye, "it was a religion. They believed that the goddess *Kalee* smiled down upon their exploits, and communicated with them through the agency of certain recognised sights and sounds. They performed ceremonial rites in propitiation of the deity, and then looked eagerly for the anticipated omens. No augurs in remote ages of classical antiquity ever consulted the auspices with more solemn outward observances, or a firmer inward faith in the expected revelation." "But this was a century back," says the reader. "Things have changed since then, surely." Yes, they have undoubtedly changed, but only outwardly. Why, this very afternoon I read in the *Times of India* that Budhu (the

<sup>1</sup> "We Hindus," says Sir N. G. Chandavarkar, "are all Nachiketas more or less, though we have lost his decision of character and persistence of purpose, whether old, adult or young. Nine out of ten of us instinctively feel inclined to hang on the lips of any one who would tell us what goes on in the world hereafter and what becomes of the soul after death. *The unseen is more potent for us than the seen.* . . . Hindu boys may cavil at Christianity and ridicule the Bible; but let a Christian missionary pitch a tent and hold forth on the Bible, swarms of young Hindus will gather and listen, for they want to know, like Nachiketa of old, what there is to say of the soul and life eternal."—*The Heart of Hinduism*.

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• approver in the Agra Murder Trial) in his confession described how Mohun, before entering Mrs. Clarke's room and murdering her, *kissed and worshipped the knife* and sharpened it on a stone." In fact, a delicately-organised nature would scent religion in the very air of the East.

Then, again, in their conception of the Deity, East and West radically differ. To the Hindu, God is an impersonal, all pervasive, intra-cosmic deity. He sees the all-soul pervading the dust as well as the stars of the heavens. To the Westerner God is a personal being, extra-cosmic, outside Himself and His universe. The result is that while the former seeks God in the silence of his own sanctuary, the latter seeks Him in things external. Habit being second nature, the Hindu turns inwards for everything—for peace, plenty and happiness. He likes better to attend to the common elements in the various views of truth. He is inclined to look at thoughts behind the words. He believes that the world process manifests from within outwards and that forms develop out of the life, and organs out of the various functions. He looks at history as the result of philosophy, as the working out of a great world-plan of human evolution. The European, on the other hand, looking outwards, depends for his peace and happiness on the outward, ever-changing things of life. His eyes are trained to notice the sharp edges of all outlines. He revels in emphasising differences. He thinks that life develops out of form, and functions out of organs, and declares that history is, after all, a mere congeries of passing events connected with the speakings, doings and intrigues of men and women. "Seeking within," remarks Georgia Gagarin, "has made the Hindu mystical, dreamy, visionary, metaphysical, oblivious of the world and its pleasures, suspicious of senses as reliable instruments for gaining knowledge. Seeking without has made the Westerner practical, wide-awake in matters • worldly, relying on his senses, doubting anything super-physical, and therefore unphilosophical." This explains why East is East and West is West; why the East, like Rachel, 'before her glass abides the livelong day,' and delights in *Contemplation*, while the West, like Leah, lets 'her fair hands unwearied ply' and finds joy in *Labour*.

It is frequently said that while the thoughts and ideals of the West are not incomprehensible to the East, those of the East are more or less wholly unintelligible to the West. And this is just as it should be. For the hoary East, like the old man who has himself experienced in his younger days the boundless energy and eagerness of youth, to make its way in

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the world and secure for itself the good things of life, has no difficulty in understanding the young and vigorous West. But the West, like the young man having superabundance of vital energy, has difficulty in understanding the peace and quiet which the hoary East seeks. In fact, *Pūrva* and *Paschima* indirectly signify as much: *pūrva* means both east and earlier or older, while *paschima* west and later or younger. The general order of Evolution seems to make civilisation travel from the East towards the West, round and round with the sun. Therefore, the ideal of the youthful West lies on the Path of active Pursuit (*pravṛtti-mārga*), while that of the aged East on the Path of peaceful Retirement (*niṛvṛtti-mārga*). And no system of social organisation is more fitted to further this ideal of the East than the one which has come down to us from time immemorial in the name of the greatest of the lawgivers.

And this for various reasons.

First of all, the Code of Manu, while admitting identity in the descent of all men from the great Father of all creation, clearly and unequivocally maintains their widely divergent inherited capacities, thus enunciating the great principle of *Inequality of Men*. On this principle, it seeks for an aristocratic arrangement of society. Some of the wisest men of the world, from Plato to Nietzsche, have wished for such a type of social organisation. "Every elevation of the type 'man,'" says Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society—and so will it always be—a society believing in a long scale of gradations of rank and differences of worth among human beings." Or, to put it in the matchless words of the great bard of all time—

"DEGREE being vizarded,  
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.  
... O, when degree is shaken,  
Which is the ladder to all high designs,  
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,  
Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,  
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,  
The primogenitive and due of birth,  
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,  
But by degree, stand in authentic place?  
Take but degree away, untune the string,  
And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets  
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters  
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,  
And make a sop of all this solid globe:  
Strength should be lord of imbecility,  
And the rude son should strike his father dead:  
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,

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enough divided the Body of Brahma into head, arms, trunk (or thighs), and legs (or feet), and said that as the head was the highest and noblest part of the human frame, those that were created from it were to have the highest rank in society and perform the noblest functions in it, such as the propagation of science, religion and law. Then came those who were created from the arms of Brahma and who were, in consequence, the incarnation of force and physical strength. These were born warriors and nobles, and their function was to bear arms and carry on the administration of the State. After the head and arms came the trunk (or thighs) which, being the centre for the production, elaboration and distribution of the vital fluid for the sustenance of the rest of the body, brought forth those whose function in society was to produce, manufacture and distribute the necessities and comforts of life, *i. e.* the agriculturists, handicraftsmen and merchants. Last came those who sprang from the lowest part of the divine frame, namely legs (or feet), and who consequently held the lowest rank in society and did all its menial work. If these last had no rights and privileges, neither had they any heavy responsibilities or harassing duties.

Thus, for Manu, all human affairs became grouped under the four Orders and the four Castes. From our knowledge of history and from common experience we find that, broadly speaking, men, all over the world, naturally fall into one or another of these four fundamental divisions according to their inner or outer characteristics. By his famous myth of the metals, Plato wanted to implant in his ideal state the same great Orders as Manu actually did ages before. "Well then, I will speak," said Socrates, "although I really know not how to look you in the face, or in what words to utter the audacious fiction, which I propose to communicate gradually, first to the rulers, then to the soldiers, and lastly to the people. They are to be told that their youth was a dream, and the education and training which they received from us, an appearance only; that in reality during all the time they were being formed and fed in the womb of the earth, they themselves and their arms and appurtenances were manufactured; and that when they were completed, the earth, their mother, sent them up; and so, their country being their mother and also their nurse, they are bound to advise for her good, and to defend her against attacks, and her citizens they are to regard as children of the earth and their own brothers. . . . Citizens, we shall say to them in our tale, *you are brothers, yet God has framed you differently.* Some of you have the power of command, and in

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the composition of these he has mingled gold, wherefore also they have the greatest honour; others he has made of silver, to be auxiliaries; others again who are to be husbandmen and craftsmen he has composed of brass and iron; *and the species will generally be preserved in the children.* But as all are of the same original stock, a golden parent will *sometimes* have a silver son, or a silver parent a golden son. And God proclaims as a first principle to the rulers, and above all else, that there is nothing which they should so anxiously guard, or of which they are to be such good guardians, as of the purity of the race. They should observe what elements mingle in their offspring; for if the son of a golden or silver parent has an admixture of brass and iron, then nature orders a transposition of ranks, and the eye of the ruler must not be pitiful towards the child because he has to descend in the scale and become a husbandman or artisan, just as there may be sons of artisans who having an admixture of gold or silver in them are raised to honour, and become guardians or auxiliaries. For an oracle says that when a man of brass or iron guards the State, it will be destroyed."

It is surprising how perfectly Plato in this remarkable myth agrees with the main thesis of Manu's Code. With Manu he also declares that "all men are brothers, yet God has framed them differently." Secondly, with Manu he also maintains that the varied capacities are inherited, for he says that education and training was in reality given to them "during all the time they were being formed and fed in the womb of the earth," and what they got afterwards was "an appearance only." Then again with Manu he strongly deprecates the admixture of different orders of society. "And God proclaims," he asserts most emphatically, "as a first principle to the rulers, and above all else, that there is nothing which they should so anxiously guard, or of which they are to be such good guardians, as of the purity of the race." And, finally, there should be enough elasticity between the orders to provide for the transference of exceptional individuals, just as in Manu's Code there are no hard and fast boundaries between two castes placed next to each other. That the System allows of considerable latitude may be seen from the fact that not a few of the Hindu saints and seers, though belonging to the lower castes, come to possess in reality not only all the privileges of a Brahmin, but are even looked up to with deepest reverence by the Brahmins themselves.

Manu's fourfold division of men is reproduced in one form or another throughout the history of the civilised world. Taking

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the European nations, we trace in their Privileged Classes or Estates a similar fourfold division of people. Society was broadly divided into—(1) Priests; (2) Nobility; (3) Freemen; (4) Serfs, Slaves or Dependents. The earliest form of estates recalls the Caste System. They were at first hereditary, and the attributes assigned to them and the myths describing their divine creation point to an original affinity to the four Indian Castes. Later on, during the Middle Ages, these Privileged Classes were influenced by the movement of history and tended to become less hereditary and more professional. And even now in every European country, though not openly recognised, still a well-understood Caste System exists, almost as rigid and as exacting as that of the Hindus: *e.g.* the strictly hereditary nobility and the rigorous legislation for marriages of the members of the royal family in different States, particularly in Austria and Germany.

Let us see if the Caste System subserves any great principles on which the structure of modern society is based. First of all it subserves the great principle of property. Does not Law allow a man to inherit his father's property and thereby acquire and maintain the power and influence which his father possessed? Does any serious politician dispute the sacred right of property? Why, then, should not an unwritten law allow a man to inherit the good name of his father and ancestors and all the undefinable social advantages attached to it? Would any serious sociologist dispute the equally sacred right of this *immaterial* form of property? In truth, is not this right more sacred than that which appertains to the mere material form of property? For the latter is not infrequently acquired by cruel and dishonest means,—in fact, it is the superior want of conscience which is often the determining quality which makes a millionaire out of one who otherwise might have been a poor man—and yet Law, which is the handmaid of Justice and the embodiment of all that was found needful and equitable in the past, freely allows—nay, enforces the right of the children to inherit the wealth of their father and ancestors, even though it be ill-gotten: witness, the vast tracts of England that were by the enclosure of commons and the division of the church lands appropriated by the panders and flatterers of Henry VIII, who were thus enabled to found noble families, a few of which by means of their not quite honourably acquired estates have come to possess extensive power and influence over the life and well-being of a large number of their countrymen.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the good

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Progress and Poverty*, bk. v. chap. ii.

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name with its attendant social advantages, which the ancestors of a person or of a class of society came to acquire, presupposes that those ancestors must have possessed more beauty, more strength, more brains, more moral force or spiritual energy—in short, must have had in them more of vital energies than the average run of men, otherwise they never could have acquired the honoured position they held in society. If this is admitted, by what name are we to call that justice which sanctifies the right of transmitting even dishonestly-acquired material forms of property, but anathematises that of handing down the more honestly-acquired immaterial form of it?

Again, the Caste System subserves the principle of division of labour, without carrying it too far and dividing men into mere segments of men, as is done in the industrial world of modern times. All the advantages which the economists claim for the division of labour may equally well be claimed for the Caste System. The advantages commonly enumerated are the saving of time and labour in keeping to one kind of work. Secondly, the classification of labour according to its capacity. Finally, the increased dexterity of the workers through constant practice of the same trade, generation after generation. To this we owe our remarkable achievements in some of our numerous art-industries. "But for the caste system," remarks Mr. E. B. Havell, "the traditional artistic culture, which gives the present generation of Indians such a splendid foundation to build upon, would long ago have disappeared entirely."<sup>1</sup> In the highest type of insects who live more or less in social communities and organised associations, such as bees and ants, we trace a distinct division of labour carried on by a most exclusive and permanently fixed system of castes. The subject is a wide one, for there are innumerable varieties of bees and at least a thousand species of ants, no two of which have the same habits. Broadly speaking, the community consists of workers and non-workers. The workers have to do all the hard work and carry on all the affairs of the community; and yet they hold a lower position in their community and are at the beck and call of the non-workers whose function is only limited to breeding. But this is not all. Among ants there are certain species that make slaves of others; of these the *Formica (Polyergus) rufescens*, as observed by Huber, is so absolutely dependent on its slaves that without their aid the species would certainly become extinct in a single year. "The males and fertile females do no work of any kind," remarks Darwin, "and the workers or sterile females,

<sup>1</sup> *The Basis for Artistic and Industrial Revival in India*, p. 47.

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though most energetic and courageous in capturing slaves, do no other work. They are incapable of making their own nests, or of feeding their own larvæ. When the old nest is found inconvenient, and they have to migrate, it is the slaves which determine the migration, and actually carry their masters in their jaws. So utterly helpless are the masters, that when Huber shut up thirty of them without a slave, but with plenty of the food which they like best, and with their own larvæ and pupæ to stimulate them to work, they did nothing: they could not even feed themselves, and many perished of hunger. Huber then introduced a single slave (*F. fusca*) and she instantly set to work, fed and saved the survivors; made some cells and tended the larvæ and put all to rights."<sup>1</sup>

What can be more extraordinary than these well-ascertained facts? Those who champion the cause of the so-called down-trodden lower castes might take a lesson from this glaring injustice of nature, which makes certain creatures bear the burden and heat of the day and at the same time degrades them to the lowest position in their own species.

This brings us to the principle of heredity, which lies at the root of the Caste System. This principle maintains that, speaking broadly, there is a tendency on the part of the offspring to reproduce the form and characters of the parental organisms. It is the glory of Darwin to have established this system permanently by a great number of interesting and exhaustive experiments, and every day fresh discoveries and experiments confirm its truth. Among horses, dogs and pigeons, it is a matter of familiar observation that the offspring reproduces not only the structural forms, but also the special characteristics of the parents. Even among ourselves it is a perfectly recognisable fact that certain mental and moral characteristics, such as obstinacy, indolence, insanity, and all the various forms of incontinence, and particular diseases, such as gout, scrofula, consumption, paralysis, etc., may be handed down with almost the same certainty and persistence as the perpetuation of the special structural forms among the animals. And as the famous Austrian naturalist, Gregor Mendel, so conclusively proved more than fifty years ago, when we notice certain peculiarities in individuals, if we take care to keep these individuals distinct from the original stock and make them breed together—then we may produce a race which will have a tendency to continue those peculiarities with almost mathematical accuracy. This is known as *selective breeding*; and of late additional support has been given to the principle by

<sup>1</sup> *The Origin of Species*, chap. viii.



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the extensive researches of Sir Francis Galton and others. The principal aim of the new science of Eugenics which Sir Francis founded, and which is being gradually recognised by eminent men of science all over the world, is to take note of the varied hereditary faculties of different men, and of the great differences in different families and races, and then to devise ways and means by which the principle of selective breeding might be put into practice in the different countries of the world, and the inefficient human stock may be improved or entirely supplanted by better strains. And it will be found after a little consideration that our much-maligned "cast-iron" system of social organisation has after all been striving for the last few thousand years to put into practice on a large scale some of the ideas of modern Eugenics by originally dividing society into a series of water-tight compartments, graduated according to certain leading mental, moral, or physical peculiarities, and then taking means to perpetuate those peculiarities by prohibiting inter-marriages. To this principle of selective breeding we owe the remarkable intellectual activity of the Brahmins and the inexplicable vitality of the traditionary inspiration and manipulative dexterity of most of the Indian art-craftsmen.

Well might Bluntschli exclaim: "Indian civilisation is the blossom and fruit of the Caste System"; and with equal truth might the good Abbé Dubois maintain: "I believe caste division to be in many respects the *chef d'œuvre*, the happiest effort, of Hindu legislation" Long ago Swami Vivekananda, when a set of bumptious social reformers were carrying on an active campaign against the Brahmins in Madras, held up a warning finger and said: "The Brahminhood, mind, is the ideal humanity in India, as wonderfully put forward by Sankaracharya at the beginning of his commentary of the Gita, where he wants to speak about the reason for Krishna's coming as a preacher for the preservation of Brahminhood, of Brahminness. That was the great end. This Brahmin, the man of God, he who has known Brahman, the ideal man, the perfect man, must remain; he must not go. And with all the defects of the caste now, we know that we must all be ready to give to Brahmins this credit, that from them have come more men with that real Brahminness in them than from other castes. That is true. That is the credit due to them from all these castes. . . . Therefore, my friend, it is no use fighting among the castes. What good will it do? It will divide us all the more, weaken us all the more, degrade us all the more." These last words of the great Swami might well be remembered

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by those who perpetually din into our ears, as Sir N. G. Chandavarkar does, that our character is being unhinged by caste, that our divisions and dissensions are being sharpened by caste, that our activities for public good are being weakened by caste, that our very national existence is being threatened by the demon of caste which has made, and is making, cowards of us all.

Though the conclusions of Mendel have not been seriously questioned, and though it is freely admitted on all hands that heredity plays an all-important part in the formation of the mental and moral characteristics of a man, yet it is believed in certain quarters that if a change is effected in the environment of the lower classes, that change is bound to modify for the better the inherited tendencies of those classes and their descendants. With the growing socialistic tendencies of all progressive governments of our times and the awakening of what is known as a "social conscience," this belief in the influence of environment is gaining ground more and more among a widening circle of so-called social reformers. "If we take children from a slum environment," argued Dr. Louis Cobbett some time back, "train and educate them to become well-conducted, self-supporting citizens, their children, though biologically they may inherit nothing from our efforts, and will be born with the same inherent bad characters as their parents, nevertheless will be brought up under entirely different conditions from those which they would have experienced if nothing had been done for their parents; and their bad characteristics may consequently never have a chance of developing. . . . By the conscious effort of the community, changes of environment may be produced which will permanently affect society." These modest expectations of Dr. Cobbett seem reasonableness itself when compared to the wild flights of imagination of some of our great humanitarians. Take, for instance, Henry George. This profound thinker starts with the general proposition that "both from observation and reflection he is inclined to think that the differences of natural power are no greater than the differences of stature or of physical strength." If this is so, we naturally ask how it is that while one man comes to rule the destinies of nations, another passes his life in hewing wood and drawing water. To which Mr. George replies that to the one the requisite opportunities for mental and moral development were given, while to the other they were denied. And on our expressing doubts as to the validity of this conclusion, he has another formidable argument ready at hand. "Turn to the lives of great men,"

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he proclaims triumphantly, "and see how easily they might never have been heard of. Had Cæsar come of a proletarian family; had Napoleon entered the world a few years earlier; had Columbus gone into the Church instead of going to sea; had Shakespeare been apprenticed to a cobbler or chimney-sweep; had Sir Isaac Newton been assigned by fate the education and the toil of an agricultural labourer; had Dr. Adam Smith been born in the coal hews, or Herbert Spencer forced to get his living as a factory operative, what would their talents have availed?" All this is wonderful! The argument sounds most convincing! The great millenarian would have done better had he left us here wondering at his marvellous speculations. But, no, he cannot rest satisfied with merely startling us, but needs must take us with him in his profound researches into the mysteries of Nature, and reveal to us her deepest and most closely guarded secret, to unlock which the greatest philosophers from the beginning of time have vainly attempted—namely, her secret of making Cæsars and Napoleons, Columbuses and Shakespeares. First of all, he maintains that "powers, of the highest order, talents the most splendid are in the children who are growing up in squalor, and vice, and ignorance." Having laid down this axiomatic truth he goes to the bees, and by a most ingenious analogy proves that "as the common worker is on need transformed into a queen bee, so, when circumstances favour his development, what might otherwise pass for a common man rises into a hero or leader, discoverer or teacher, sage or saint. . . . The influence of heredity, which it is now the fashion to rate so highly, is as nothing compared with the influences which mould the man after he comes into the world . . . Consider the possibilities of a state of society that gave OPPORTUNITY to all. Let imagination fill out the picture; its colours grow too bright for words to paint. Consider the moral elevation, the intellectual activity, the social life. . . . Who shall measure the heights to which our civilisation may soar? Words fail the thought! It is the Golden Age of which poets have sung and high-raised seers have told in metaphor! It is the glorious vision which has always haunted man with gleams of fitful splendour. It is what he saw whose eyes at Patmos were closed in a trance. It is the culmination of Christianity—the City of God on earth, with its walls of jasper and its gates of pearl! It is the reign of the Prince of Peace!"<sup>1</sup>

Carried away by the pious ravings of a few estimable millenio-

<sup>1</sup> *Progress and Poverty*, bk. ix. chap. v., and bk. x. chaps. ii. and v.

maniacs like Henry George, the good city-fathers of Glasgow more than forty years ago met in their Parish Council and most solemnly resolved to make an honest effort to save the children of Glasgow's submerged tenth from growing up in squalor and vice and ignorance. With this laudable object they cast their eyes on the Western Coast of Scotland, inhabited as it is by honest, thrifty and hard-working men, and endowed with some of the loveliest scenery in all Scotland, as any of my readers who have travelled through those parts of Scotland will attest. Surely if any part of the British Isles provides the proper environment and requisite opportunities deemed so necessary by Henry George for the reclamation of the child of sin, poverty and ignorance, it is the West Coast of Scotland. "Here," argued the civic fathers, "is an ideal environment and entirely trustworthy people. The sea breezes of the coast will minister to the health and vigour of the bodily frame of our shipwrecked horde of civic outcasts as its scenic displays will assuredly arouse their dormant imaginative faculties. Besides, the God-fearing, sober-minded native population, will be just the proper human agency to appeal to the better nature of our morally and mentally crippled denizens, and change them in time to come into useful, law-abiding citizens. We cannot, of course, hope to do much with the parents. We may at once admit the fact that they are hopeless and irreclaimable. But with their children it is otherwise; they are plastic and could be moulded and, if we only persevere, will certainly respond to better influences."

No intentions could be more noble, no social service more worthy of applause and remembrance! But let us not, for the present, dwell on the nobility of the intentions nor on the noteworthiness of the social service, but go straight to the most remarkable results they have to show after an extended period of forty years' trial. In describing them I will not trust myself lest I state them unfairly, but leave Mr. G. P. Mudge to enlighten us, not only because he is in possession of sufficient information about that memorable social experiment, but because the information is based on his personal inquiries and prolonged investigations carried on at intervals in one of the islands lying along the coast of Scotland.

"The pauper children from Glasgow are boarded out with the native crofters, who are paid from three-and-sixpence to five shillings weekly for the maintenance of each child. This money is paid by the Parish Council. The children are sent to the island *when quite young*—some little more than infants—and attend at the village school under the guardianship of the

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crofter with whom they are boarded until they are fourteen years of age. When they leave school some of them remain upon the island, and are employed in farm work by the crofter upon his croft. Doubtless, in a few cases there have been ostensible successes. I say ostensible, because in some of the supposed successful cases with which I am acquainted, a sufficiently long period has not elapsed to enable me to judge of permanent success, and in a few cases it is possible that the ancestry has not been bad.

“Leaving these questionable, untested, and unanalysed successes alone, what are the results with regard to the remainder?—They are precisely that which the old adage ‘What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh,’ would lead us to anticipate. We may sum them up in a single sentence. It is that, in this beautiful island with its historic and even sacred associations, *a new slum area is being created* by the operation of the inherent slum instincts of the putatively rescued denizens of Glasgow’s slums. Here we see in the making, not slum people by slum environment, but slums fashioned out of the depths of the slum instincts of a congenital race of slum producers. Here in this island, where at one time only ordinary human weaknesses prevailed, are now heard the obscene language and the suggestive songs of the slums; here at night time, the Glasgow rowdies congregate in bands and create noise and disturbance. They link their arms, and, rushing through the village street in a serried rank, shouting, whistling and gesticulating, drive all others before them. Where there are maid servants, there they collect in groups and indulge in language which is not of the Highlands, but of Glasgow slums. No windows are safe from them, and many have been broken by stones thrown at night time. Blinds are wrenched from their rollers and knockers from the doors. Slates are knocked off the roofs. Old women of eighty live in terror of these rowdies. The young native children are bullied and terrorised by them. They are viciously cruel to the cattle and dogs left in their charge. . . . They chase and worry sheep in lamb, causing premature birth and rendering the sheep valueless. They carry false and unauthorised messages from their guardians, and obtain articles of food by false pretences from the shopkeepers and then consume the articles among themselves. . . . Some are such perpetual thieves that the crofters send them back. If they are rebuked by their masters for bad or neglected work, they will surreptitiously destroy some of his property in revenge. The

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consequence is, that deeds which ought to be punished go unpunished.

"Here, under an environment which in no way ministers to them, do the slum instincts come out. Those instincts which delight in roaming abroad at night indulging in horse play, and leading others to do wrong, are here manifested, not in the slums, but in a beautiful environment which makes for peace and industry and honesty. . . . They who are there, be they native or visitor or boarded-out youths and girls, find nothing to incite them to such acts as I have described. Yet we do find precisely what biological considerations indicate we must inevitably find—namely, that the transplantation of inherently vicious and criminal instincts from the slums of cities to the beautiful environment of the Western islands, is but re-creating there the slums which were also made in the city by them. Given bad instincts, and be the environment what it may, they will manifest themselves with the same certainty that the sun rises and sets alike on the mountain and valley, on sea and land. . . . It is not only in this island that these facts exist. They are everywhere around us. They are in our pauper institutions, in our reformatories, in our prisons, in our schools, in our daily life, and in many cultured homes, the good names of which have been disgraced by the deeds of an adopted son or daughter chosen from an unhappy stock.

"Every experience of our social life points to the conclusion that a traditional inheritance of external concepts is incapable of exercising any useful influence, except upon those whose physiological inheritance is so constituted that it *spontaneously* responds to the external agents. The truth is, if the inherent desires and instincts are there, no environment which we can originate, or maintain, or conceive, will render it impossible for these instincts, or defects, to manifest themselves. *We cannot, by any environment, call into activity qualities which do not exist.* But neither can we suppress inherent qualities, or even the ultimate manifestation of their activities, merely because an appropriate environment is absent."

Let us take a solemn lesson from this undoubtedly well-intentioned, but fatally ill-conceived social experiment of the Glasgow Parish Council. It is the most perfect exemplification, with which I am acquainted, of that great truth which has been proclaimed in one form or another by the world's greatest thinkers ages after ages and in our own days almost with a savage vehemence by Nietzsche and Shaw,— that "we cannot

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make a silk purse of a sow's ear." Our lower castes are not composed of criminals, it is true: but they have certain evil desires and vicious instincts inherent in them which they betray sooner or later and which ultimately develop into habits which call forth the just repugnance of other people. It has been said by the author of a recent publication, "that if a kindly hand is extended to them, even the lowest of these depressed can be speedily raised to a higher plane, has been abundantly shown by the efforts of Christian Missionaries."<sup>1</sup> In support of his statement he quotes an extract from a recent report of the Telugu Mission which commences with a frank admission that it is quite true that the Panchamas are poor, dirty, ignorant, and peculiarly addicted to the more mean and servile vices. But, as a consequence of the care and earnest solicitude of the missionary teachers, "their gross ignorance disappears; they become cleaner and more decent in their persons and homes; they give up cattle poisoning and grain stealing, two crimes particularly associated with their class; they abstain from the practice of infant marriage and concubinage, to which almost all classes of Hindu society are addicted; they lose much of the old servile spirit which led them to grovel at the feet of their social superiors, and they acquire more sense of the rights and dignity which belong to them as men. Where they are able to escape their surroundings they prove themselves in no way inferior, either in mental or in moral character, to the best of their fellow-countrymen. Especially is this the case in the Mission Boarding Schools, where the change wrought is a moral miracle."

This Report is indeed a miracle! It would have been interesting to learn for whose edification the Report was drawn up. It looks—and the last sentence most clumsily lets the cat out of the bag—as if it were intended for the smug and easy self-satisfaction of those harmless, good-natured, conscience-stricken creatures outside of India—the subscribers to the Mission Fund: for, surely, it would be insulting the understanding of those who are born and bred in India to be told that missionaries have reclaimed the Panchamas from certain evil practices "to which *almost all* classes of Hindu society are addicted," and that these Panchamas, who for ages were known to possess certain vicious and criminal instincts, suddenly in a generation or two prove themselves through the toil and trouble of Missionaries "in *no* way inferior, either in mental (?) or in moral character, to the *BEST* of their fellow-countrymen."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sir Valentine Chirol's *Indian Unrest*, chap. xlv.

Leaving, therefore, the wonder-working missionaries to perform their moral miracles, we shall turn to the outstanding grievance of these lower castes, namely, their "untouchableness." Much is made of this social ostracism of theirs and many piteous stories are told, not without a lavish display of imagination, to depict their life of "unspeakable degradation." We are told how even "in seasons of drought when casual water dries up, a Pariah is not allowed to draw water from the village well, lest he should 'pollute' it by his touch," and how a Panchama, should he see a Brahmin approaching him, has to turn tail in a narrow street or on a bridge, run back to the end of it and "plunge out of sight into the jungle on the side of the road," lest he should "pollute" the Brahmin by passing within the prescribed distance.

That any human being could be untouchable is unthinkable to a Western mind. But what appears unthinkable to a Westerner may appear perfectly natural to an Oriental. At any rate, the only fair way of looking at this question of "untouchableness" is from the standpoint of those who are themselves the victims of this cruel and unjust custom. If I said that the lower castes do *not* consider the custom either cruel or unjust, the reader most naturally will not accept my statement; I shall consequently call an English gentleman to bear witness to the fact, a gentleman well known on this side of India, who was not only a staunch supporter of their cause, but a most active worker in all movements for their advancement,—I mean Sir John Muir-Mackenzie. "Now in dealing with this extremely difficult subject," remarked Sir John at a farewell gathering in his honour, "it is advisable to look facts squarely in the face. The relegation of what we now call the depressed classes to the deplorable position which they now occupy in the religious and social system of the orthodox Hindu, a position in which their touch and even their shadow causes ceremonial defilement, dates from nothing less than antiquity. It may have been one of the cruel consequences of conquest and subjugation in barbarous times. But, however that may be and whatever its origin, it has become stereotyped by religious or quasi-religious sanction, and what is more, whether out of despair or mere habituation, has been for centuries acquiesced in *with a resignation approaching cheerfulness* by the very classes which are the victims of the system. Even the Mahar who has succeeded in life, will generally accept, when he encounters the Brahmin, his exclusion as an outcast, and like the Jewish leper of old will cry out, if not in words,

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yet by his demeanour and behaviour, 'Unclean, unclean!' The Mahar schoolboy will take his seat in the verandah apart from his schoolfellows of the same class; even a Native officer—member of a municipality—will do the same in a Municipality meeting. I suppose this resignation is, at least in part, due to the teachings of the religious doctrine of reincarnation, and the expiation of each new life of sins committed in earlier lives. A Mahar finds himself a Mahar by his own fault committed in a previous state of existence. The position conveys to him no savour of injustice or tyranny. He accepts it, so far as he may think at all about it, as a just application of the universal law, and hopes by living well through his hard probation to come up a stage higher in the next life. "In the same way the higher castes accept their position as part of the scheme of things—belief which has been implanted in them from generation to generation. There is no idea in their mind of cruelty or tyranny. There are such things as Mahars, just for the same reason as there are such things as birds of the air and beasts of the field."

This is the pith of the whole question. The position in which the Mahar finds himself "conveys to him no savour of injustice or tyranny." There is "no idea in his mind of cruelty or tyranny." The idea of cruelty and injustice, tyranny and inhumanity, exists only in the fertile imagination of that unique product of modern civilisation—the sentimentalist. The sacred cause of suffering millions is ever at the heart of these sentimentalists. The great Brotherhood counts its members all over the world, and should they spot their millions anywhere—and even though these millions, like the Mahars, are so wretched as not to suffer when they clearly ought to—with an eye to business, they straight off let loose their philanthropic bombast and proclaim from the house-tops: "The treatment accorded to the untouchables forms the standing disgrace of Hinduism. The Hindu community stands condemned for having neglected one of the greatest duties and carried on its head a load of sins because of the degradation to which it had subjected those whom it called its members, but whom it refused to recognise as being within its respectable fold."

If, therefore, the Mahars accept their status in society as part of the scheme of things, and complain of no tyranny nor cruelty, nor even injustice, it is evident that those who accuse the Brahmins of treating the Mahars with contempt, cruelty, and even oppression, are only using the poor Mahar as a

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channel for letting off their superfluous humanitarian zeal. Speaking from personal experience and systematic observation of many years, I may say without the slightest hesitation that I have never yet seen a Brahmin—leaving aside the charge of oppression and cruelty as entirely unfounded and almost libellous—ill-treat a Mahar, or even speak to him contemptuously; on the contrary, if the Mahar kept his proper distance, he was invariably treated kindly and helped in every possible manner. On the other hand, I have observed over and over again while travelling in a railway train, many of those Englishmen who are ever-ready to champion the cause of the Mahars, not only treat them, but even high-caste Hindus of culture and refinement, with supreme contempt. For some time to come the Depressed Classes Mission Society cannot better employ its energies than in trying to mend the ways of that set of Englishmen who, without declaring the Indians as untouchables, practically treat them as such whenever it enters into their heads to do so.

Again, as Sir Richard Lamb so aptly pointed out, the use of such words as "slavery" and "bondage" were entirely without justification in these days when the Mahars enjoyed the same rights as Brahmans. "He can keep for himself," remarked Sir Richard, "the fruits of his own labour, he is able to go and come as he pleases, he can sit in a railway carriage or tramcar beside the member of the highest castes. He may learn at schools, he may work at what occupation he pleases, he may acquire and transmit property, and if he acquires sufficient property he may vote at elections." And there have been cases in which contracts were given to Mahars who had integrity and showed sufficient capacity to control men. One such case came within the notice of Sir John Muir-Mackenzie while he was inspecting the great Godavri Canal Work, where a Mahar held and worked large contracts which came to something over a lac of rupees.

There are certain classes of persons among the Hindus who are ceremonially impure, there are others who are pure. Such they are, such they must remain. No benevolent intention, no kindly action on the part of Government can do away with this conviction, accumulated for ages, circulating through the blood, and rubbed into the bone of all classes of Hindus, including the lower classes themselves: men of the same caste are untouchable to each other on certain occasions, and so are women of the same family. It is therefore difficult for those who are unacquainted with the elaborate ceremonial system of

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the Hindus, to grasp fully the important consequences attached to physical contact. Besides, we must remember that in the past spiritual superiority has invariably raised a Mahar or a Pariah to the level of the highest men of the higher castes. The principle seems to have been that, if a man led a spiritual life as it has been traditionally understood by Hindus, he was entitled to the reverence of all castes—no matter in what particular caste he himself was born. The practice of religion, renunciation, or the leading of a spiritual life in any manner whatever, has always commanded respect and reverence in India from time immemorial. It is by no means improbable that a great Pariah pandit who could quote the *Upanishads* would compel, as did the Pariah in the story told of Sankaracharya, the respect of the higher castes. Sankara, walking along the streets of Benares, met a Pariah who, to his indignation and astonishment, refused to make way for him. On Sankara protesting against the insolence of the Pariah, the latter upbraided him for his hypocrisy in preaching that the soul in every man was the God-soul, and then treating a Pariah as an inferior being. Sankara was so overcome by the evident justice of the man's rebuke that he forthwith threw himself at the other's feet in acknowledgment of his gratitude for the great lesson he taught him. But the Hindus take special delight in telling the story of Suta. He, being a Chandala, belonged to the lowest of castes, and was consequently despised of men, but by his life of religious austerity, and particularly on account of his love and knowledge of the Puranas, he not only acquired a position of equality with men of the highest caste, but was actually *worshipped* by them as a saint. The Hindu scriptures abound in such stories. The heart of Hinduism is quite sound at the core, and has never been known to pass by real spiritual worth without recognising it in one form or another. In fact, no real spiritual worth all the world over can ever be neglected for long. The recognition must come sooner or later. An instance to the point is the Right Rev. Dr. Vednapagan Samuel Azarian, who was only lately consecrated bishop of the Established Church of England in India. He was born of poor parents, and belonged to a caste whose claims to social eminence were not much above those of a Mahar or a Chandala. He took orders, and being a man of vigour and character, rose rapidly, and even overcame the colour prejudice and other social distinctions which long barred his way to the high dignity in the Anglican Church to which he was entitled by his exceptional abilities and the

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extraordinary zeal he displayed for the advancement of his adopted religion. "Ah!" exclaims the reader, "here is a strong case made out for the abolition of the Caste System. Would not Dr. Azarian have passed his life in the endless drudgery of a Mahar or a Pariah, if the missionaries had not come to his rescue? Would not then his talents and his enthusiasm have been lost to the Native Christians?" To the Native Christians, most certainly, they would have been lost, but not to the community at large. I verily believe that whatever the Native Christians will gain through him is more than counterbalanced by the loss which the lower castes have to sustain through his secession. Had he remained among the latter he would have been most certainly a glorious example and a living force for their spiritual elevation, and would most probably have been worshipped as a saint not only by them, but by all Hindus of this and succeeding generations. As a bishop he will be soon lost in the crowd, and his place could have been equally well, if not with greater effectiveness, filled by an English clergyman.

"What prevents the members of any caste from declaring themselves Brahmins?" argued Swami Vivekananda once. "Say there are castes here with ten thousand people each. If these put their heads together and say, 'We will call ourselves Brahmins,' nothing can stop them; who is to say nay? Because, whatever it be, each caste is exclusive of the other. It does not meddle with the others' affairs, even the several divisions of one caste do not meddle with the other divisions, and those great epoch-makers, Sankaracharya and others, were the great caste-makers."

It is surprising into what contradictions we human beings are frequently led. I believe at the present moment nothing is so much bemoaned by our leading publicists and educationists as the growing Irreverence of children towards their parents, of students towards their teachers, of the ruled towards their rulers, and generally of the subordinate towards his superior; and yet they cannot perceive that when they stimulate the vulgar pretensions of the lower castes to an equality with the higher, they are indirectly sapping perhaps the noblest instinct of humanity—the one gift of God that makes life worth living—Reverence for all that is eternally higher and nobler than one's self. The Mahars, or rather their interested manipulators, have literally taken their apostles at their word, for in the Petition they sent to Lord Crewe, three years ago, they magniloquently proclaim that "the Mahar has *all* the elements in his nature which

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the other castes and races of this great country possess, and under the kindly influence of British justice and British sympathy they can be awakened and developed as they have been in their brethren of the *so-called* higher classes . . . We are not essentially inferior to *any* of our Indian fellow-subjects."

Could insolence go further!—Mahars not inferior to a Brahmin or a Parsi or a Rajput? As well might a Cockney swell his chest and question, "Is not 'Arry as good as any Englishm'n alive?"

If the Mahars and Chamars honestly believe that there is no essential distinction between man and man, and that all classes higher than themselves are so only in name, it follows *ipso facto* that certain other classes, such as the Mangs and Bhungees, generally recognised as lower than Mahars and Chamars, are likewise not really so but merely in name. Consequently if they want to abide by the principle they impudently proclaim, a Chamar surely dare not have any objection to let a Mahar enter his house and sit by his side, nor should a Mahar feel indignant if he is asked to eat with a Bhungee. "On one occasion," said an Hon. Member in the Bombay Legislative Council during the course of a debate on the education and employment of the Depressed Classes, "I questioned my shoemaker, a Chamar, whether he would allow a Mahar to enter his house and sit by his side. 'No, sir,' he retorted, 'how can I allow a Mahar to sit by my side? If I did so, my *jamat*' (caste-assembly) 'will put me out of caste.' If you ask a Mahar whether he would dine with a Bhungee, he will feel indignant, and will say, 'How can a Mahar, a real Soma Vamshi' (descendant of the moon) 'dine with a Bhungee?'"

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if, instead of straight off demanding the privileges of the higher castes for their chosen classes, they made use of a little humility out of the abundance they undoubtedly possess, and limited the range of their ambition, and concentrated all their energy on taking the first perfectly simple step of elevating the Bhungee to the level of the Mahar. And, should they succeed here, they might next turn their attention to elevating this mixed caste of Bhungee-Mahars to that of Chamars. And in the space of the next fifty years should they be successful in abolishing most of the caste distinctions among their own chosen people of the three lowest castes,—that, indeed, will be memorable service, and then certainly will be the time for taking the next step forward. For the present, let us keep in mind what the great Swami so emphatically told us many years ago—

“Do not degrade the higher castes; do not out-crush the Brahmin. Remember the great epoch-makers, Sankaracharya and others, were the great caste-makers.”

Let the Hindus beware lest with their characteristic placidity they allow themselves to be carried away by the puerile platitudes and sonorous sentimentality of the so-called social reformers into destroying one of the most remarkable institutions of the world, sacred to the soil of their fatherland, and hallowed by ages of unbroken traditions. “Boys, moustached babies,” once said Swami Vivekananda, addressing, in his own expressive English, a gathering of these imbecile innovators in Madras, “standing up and wanting to dictate laws to three hundred millions of people with thousands of traditions at their back! Are you not ashamed? Stand back from such blasphemy and learn first your lessons, irreverent boys!”

Yes, let us first learn our lessons. Let us first carefully and thoroughly investigate the principles on which the great Institute rests, and then, when we have succeeded in proving them false, will be the time to anathematise the System as Mr. Shoshee Chunder Dutt does in his *India, Past and Present*. “The sum total of the effects of Caste is, that civilisation has been brought to a standstill in the country by its mischievous restrictions, and that there is no hope of this being remedied till these restrictions are removed.” This charge of fixing once and for ever the state of things and thwarting all progress and higher development of State and society has often and often been levelled against the Caste System. Its ideal, it is said, is rest: movement is dangerous. This is as good an example as can be given of the fatal tendency of judging Eastern questions by Western ideals. The question is not



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whether the ideal of our Caste System is compatible with the spirit of the West, but whether it is in keeping with the spirit of the East. All conclusions, based on any other method than this, are bound to be both false and futile. Even as it is, the System is the best conceivable safeguard against the cretinous creed of our times: "Advancement in life at all cost, leaving the hindmost to the devil." The curse with which this age of hurry and restlessness is specially afflicted is that which was proclaimed to Micah and Hagar: "Thou shalt eat but not be satisfied." Against the malignant influence of this curse our wonderful System acts as a kind of exorciser by strictly keeping the fatal desire of "getting on at all cost" of every class and grade of society within fixed and definite limits. Hence it furnishes many perfect examples, for which Ruskin and all the deepest thinkers of the West have sighed, of people who, leaving Heaven to decide whether they are to rise in the world or not, decide for themselves to stay pleasantly in the station in which Providence has placed them.

To repeat once more, Nature, *not* Manu, separates from one another the mainly intellectual individuals and those excelling in beauty, strength and character from the rest who are distinguished neither in the one nor in the other. "In all this," most emphatically maintains Nietzsche, "there is nothing arbitrary, nothing 'artificial'; what is otherwise is artificial,—by what is otherwise, nature is put to shame. . . . *Only by the order of castes, the order of rank, the supreme law of life itself is formulated*; the separation of the free types is necessary for the maintenance of society, for the making possible of higher and highest types,—the *inequality of rights* is the very condition of there being rights at all.—A right is a privilege. In his mode of existence every one has his privilege. Let us not undervalue the privilege of the mediocre. Life always becomes harder towards the summit,—the cold increases, responsibility increases. A high civilisation is a pyramid: it can only stand upon a broad basis, it has for a first prerequisite a strongly and soundly consolidated mediocrity. . . . For the mediocre it is a happiness to be mediocre. . . . Whom do I hate most among the mob of the present day? The Socialists, the Chandala Apostles, who undermine the working man's instinct, his pleasure, his feeling of contentedness with his petty existence,—who make him envious, who destroy his reverence. The wrong never lies in *unequal* rights, but in the pretension to 'equal rights'."

Thus summarises one of the greatest philo-

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Europe, his conception of a perfect social organisation of human beings as they are and ever will be under the inevitable conditions which life entails. And the only existing social organisation which comes nearest to this ideal, is the System of Castes propounded by one who was the first and greatest of those Immortals who are the spectators of all time and all existence—Manu.

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than when a few are abnormally developed, so argued, a nation is more truly prosperous when all its productive forces are moderately active than when its entire energy is expended in only a few directions. In other words, a nation's prosperity, in general, depends not so much on the quantity of wealth produced as on the diversity of its industries, as would develop all possible phases of the national productive power. Mr. Justice Ranade, then, cited John Stuart Mill's memorable statement in which he maintains that any nation which desires economic progress has to take care that with the advance it seeks to make, its urban population bears an increasing ratio to its rural masses. Finally, taking up Dr. Watts' memorandum on the Resources of British India, he read a paragraph in which Dr. Watts, with a frankness unusual in official, complains that "the political domination of one country by another attracts far more attention of one formidable, though unfelt domination, which the more enterprise, and skill of one country exercise the Capital, and Manufacture of another." This signifies the Trade quoted by Mr. Gokhale in his presidential address was ssage was Indian National Congress, and it has been cited and re-quoted to demonstrate the insidious influence which paralyses the springs of all the varied industrial activities of

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cotton spinning and weaving—we find that during that period of twenty years, it has expanded beyond the most hopeful calculations of its early pioneers. In 1890, there were in the whole of India 137 mills with 3,274,196 spindles and 23,412 looms, employing 102,721 hands; while in 1910 there were 263 mills with 6,195,671 spindles and 82,725 looms, employing 233,624 hands.

Not satisfied with the splendid progress already made in this direction, our foremost public men both in and out of the Council chambers persistently urge the Government to make greater efforts to accelerate the rate of progress by spreading technical, commercial and scientific education on a more practical basis among the lower masses in every part of the country. In fact, on this subject the conscience of India is so fully awakened that one of the highest officials, who was lately at the head of one of the important provinces of India, said in a forcible speech three years ago, "the check to this country's progress is its reliance on one industry, viz. agriculture. The visitor from the West opens his eyes as he travels for hundreds of miles by railway without seeing a single factory chimney. If we want India to prosper," continued Sir John Hewett, emphasising every word, "we should endeavour to get it studded with factories after the manner of the flourishing countries of modern Europe."

There is an undoubted disagreement between the Rulers and the Ruled on the question of free and compulsory Elementary Education. There is a real difference of opinion between Orthodox and Educated India on the question of the Caste System. But on the question of Industrial development there is no disagreement, no difference of opinion, no conflict of interests. To put it in the vigorous language of Mr. Ranade, "Hindus and Mohammedans, Parsees and Christians, the Rulers and the Ruled, the privileged and the unprivileged classes, all alike" desire to promote the Industrial and Economic progress of this country and ensure the permanent triumph of the modern spirit in this ancient land. It is evident, therefore, that the one creed which finds favour through the length and breadth of India is that so eloquently proclaimed by Sir John Hewett—to get India studded with factories after the manner of the flourishing countries of modern Europe. In a word, in the factorisation of India lies her progress and her prosperity.

Many and inexplicable are the ways in which Fate works in the affairs of men and brings to naught their most care-

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the most up-to-date factory legislation and by every conceivable form of social organisation. The most humane laws have been passed and strictly enforced to reduce long hours of work, to maintain the health and general efficiency of the workman and to ensure the safety of his life and limb. These laws have been supplemented by unions, bureaux, and all manner of other helping societies established to secure his rights, to minister to his comforts, to provide him with the necessary amenities of life and to maintain him in case of accident or ill-health, in unemployment or old age. Never had the upper ruling classes so much sympathy with the lower, or charity for them, as they have at this day, and yet never were they so much hated by the latter as now. And why? The answer is plain. To put it shortly, the factory system has gradually dehumanised the operative into a mere animated tool. And to complete his degradation, a too minute division of labour makes him exhaust the little piece of intelligence that is left in him, "not in making a pin or a nail, but the point of a pin or the head of a nail."

It is verily this degradation of the modern operative into a part of a machine that, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the masses all over Europe into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. Their universal outcry against wealth, and against nobility, is not forced from them either by the pressure of famine, or the sting of mortified pride. It is not that men are ill fed, *but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure.* The real labour trouble is not that the worker does not get sixpence more a day or that he is not housed in a garden suburb, but the real trouble lies in the fact that the worker is bored and bored to distraction by his work. The essential problem of modern labour is the problem of Boredom. No factory hand throughout the world wakes up on a Monday morning without instantaneously feeling a tremor pass through his body. Work must, to some extent, interest; if it bores, no power on earth will keep a man doing it contentedly. It is not that men are pained by the scorn of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labour to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men.

For this degradation of the workman, modern Political Economy stands primarily responsible. The greatest doctors of that science in England have always consistently maintained

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in one form or another that by extracting from every individual workman under *reasonably satisfactory conditions* the greatest possible amount of work—*no matter what the nature of the work may be*—the greatest resultant advantage is obtained by the community, and through the community, by reversion, to the workman himself. That, however, would be the result, if the workman were an engine of which the motive power was steam or any other agent of calculable force. But the workman, on the contrary, being an engine whose motive power is a Soul, the elaborate calculations of the political economists, being not based on the force of this peculiar agent, are proved to be false at a crisis when lives and wealth are at stake. The futility of such calculations was never more signally demonstrated than during the last labour trouble in England. The affairs of the most important industries of England were practically in a state of deadlock, and the political economists who at all times most gallantly came forward to solve—and did always solve to their own satisfaction—the most abstruse economic problems, seemed to hang back and would not offer any solution of the difficulty such as might convince or calm the opposing parties. Obstinately the masters took one view of the matter, as obstinately the operatives another, and no political science could set them at one.

And so it will never set them at one unto the end of time, unless it takes into its calculations the subtle force that moves the human engine, though, of course, it could always rely upon its ingenious makeshifts of arbitration, fewer hours, increase of wages and similar palliatives to put off the evil day. But when it does take into its calculations the subtle force, it will find that in all truth it has solved all problems but the real problem—the problem of how to make the necessary work of the world interesting and satisfying to the people who do it.

Many a time have we sighed over our own imperfect product and admired the finish and all round perfectness of English goods and thought how great and advanced England must be, because her slightest work was done so thoroughly. "Alas!" sighs Ruskin, "if read rightly, these perfectnesses are signs of a slavery in our England a thousand times more bitter and more degrading than that of the scourged African, or helot Greek. Men may be beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle, slaughtered like summer flies, and yet remain, in one sense, and the best sense, free. But to smother their souls within them, to blight and hew into rotting pollards the sucking branches of their human intelligence, to make the

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flesh and skin which, after the worm's work on it, is to see God, into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with—this it is to be slave-masters indeed; and there might be more freedom in England, though her feudal lord's lightest words were worth men's lives, and though the blood of the vexed husbandman dropped in the furrows of her fields, than there is while the animation of her multitudes is sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke, and the strength of them is given daily, to be wasted into the fineness of a web, or racked into the exactness of a line." Well might Carlyle say that slavery, whether abolished by law or by law abrogated, exists very extensively in this world, in and out of the West Indies, and can never be abolished by Act of Parliament, but only the name of it, which is very little.

Plato and Xenophon, Shakespeare and Chaucer, Ruskin and Carlyle—all the men of any age or country who seem to have had Heaven's music on their lips, agree in their scorn of Merchanic life. Why need we go to Europe?—even our own great law-giver discourages, almost condemns the use of large machines<sup>1</sup> for private commercial purposes. And this because it is always better for an operative to work on a hand-loom which gives him opportunity for the development of his taste commensurate with his limited artistic capacity, than to stand idle while a power-loom weaves for him and let the little intelligence and the still less artistic faculty that are left to him, be used up, *not* in the selection of the quality of the material or the laying out of its designs, but in piecing up the broken thread and setting the machine going from sun-rise to sun-set, month after month, year in and year out.

This degradation of the modern factory-hand is all the more deplorable when we consider that his character is moulded by the kind of work he does. Our cheap education mongers and our Mahar-apostles might well learn the fact which cannot be gainsaid: that the character of men depends more on their occupation than on any teaching that we can give or any status that we can assign them. The employment forms the habit of body and mind and the greater part of a man's moral or persistent nature; and no effort that he can make under any special excitement, religious or otherwise, can change those habits when once they are formed. "Employment," says Ruskin, "is the half, and the primal half, of education—it is the warp of it; and the fineness or the endurance of all subsequently woven pattern depends wholly on its straightness and

<sup>1</sup> *Mahayuntra-purvatranum*, *Manu* xi. 63.



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strength. And whatever difficulty there may be in tracing through past history the remoter connexions of event and cause, one chain of sequence is always clear: the formation, namely, of the character of nations by their employments, and the determination of their final fate by their character. . . . And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blast, is all in very deed for this,—that we manufacture everything there except men; we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and refine sugar and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine and to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages.” And all the teaching and all the preaching that have been done in England since these soul-stirring words were written fifty years ago, have served but to make that cry more audible, for the wonderful universal “teaching” has only helped to make the factory-hand more vividly conscious of his misery and his drudgery, and the preaching has only ended in mocking at them. The illustrated newspapers, cheap theatres and excursions, *still cheaper cinema-shows and a score of other collateral forces* have filled his mind with ideas of ways of living infinitely more agreeable and interesting than his own. It is precisely these spectacular shows of the luxury, excitement, aimless pleasures and endless extravagances of the prosperous classes that taunt and deride him and leave an indelible impression on his mind that it is to provide the rich and the powerful with these that his brow must sweat and his back ache. “The cardinal fact before us,” remarks Mr. Wells, “is that the workers do not intend to stand things as they are, and that no clever arguments, no expert handling of legal points, no ingenious appearances of concession, will stay the progressive embitterment.” I do not at all wonder at this progressive embitterment; the wonder is that it should not have come earlier. I have personally visited the darkest corners of Dublin and Manchester, and in London have stood on the Embankment with my hand to my mouth, exclaiming to myself, “Could misery go further!” From a shaded corner, I watched, and watched long, the silent, half-drooping occupants of the benches, and what made my heart sink within me was the stamp of utter HOPELESSNESS that I noticed on their ghastly pale faces as the flare of a passing “taxi” lit them up. You may rob a man of his worldly possessions, you may deprive him of the society of those who are near and dear to him, yet if you leave him with Hope, he will manage to live. But deprive him of Hope, and that instant you send him into living

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death. This is the curse of modern industrialism. It will be said, and not without some justification, that my personal conclusions as to the evils of the English industrial system are based, after all, on fleeting impressions; but men who have studied this great problem of England's underworld are even more emphatic on this point. Here is a sketch of one of the great industrial centres of England drawn by an independent inquirer from over the Continent. "Lasses of thirteen and fourteen stand for hours at the champing, vicious presses, which devour and spit forth an unceasing stream of tempered steel under the deft hands of the operator, until the deadly hypnotism of clanking, groaning machines, uttering a single note, and the unremitting, monotonous movements of hands, arms and eyes, work their will upon the human thing and debase it into an automatic, unthinking part of the mechanism. I observed," continues Mr. Hermann Scheffauer, "that many of the girls (in Birmingham), when released from the machines, walked with shoulders sloping to one side, due to the uninterrupted pulling of levers for some ten hours a day. Many seemed nerve-harried and anæmic, utterly exhausted at evening, or even at noon, pale creatures, prematurely aged, though here and there, especially in shops that were kept well ventilated and clean, healthy-looking girls may be encountered as elsewhere." Here is another sketch of the mode of life of factory-hands. "In parts of Ashton-under-Lyne, of Stalybridge, Oldham, Rochdale, Accrington, and other centres, the little 'homes' of the workers scarcely deserve that goodly name. But the grimmest, most ghastly warrens lie, without doubt, in the Manchester district of Ancoats and the ironically named Angel Meadow of Birmingham. Here many of the factory workers live in noisome dwellings of two or three rooms, holes that merely serve as resting places where the over-wearied bodies may fling themselves down in the intervals granted them in the withering round of toil. In many cases the women and children who sweat in the mills and shops—when the opportunity offers—come home only to encounter the blows and curses of the father and husband, usually an unskilled labourer and often a common drunkard. Ugly, dingy little pawnshops abound everywhere. In their windows may be seen dusty stacks of corduroy trousers, cheap finery, and common necessary articles of everyday use, such as teapots and frying pans, all pawned for a few wretched pence. Few of these women make any attempt at cookery. It has become a vague tradition with most of them—a lost art. Everything save the most barbarically

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simple boiling and frying is beyond them. Their labour, too, like that of the boys and men, is untrained. In being made mere adjuncts to pieces of machinery, they have forgotten how to minister decently to their simple human needs, even when the means are at hand. The feeding of babies is also a matter of careless guesswork and crude experiment with impossible and deadly foods. Old and young partake of an unvarying diet of 'bits o' cheese,' or fried fish with indigestible leathery 'chip' potatoes—rough, unnourishing food, bought in one of the numerous ill-smelling fish shops and hurriedly swallowed."

Mark, reader, the civilising effect of a hundred years of Industrialism! Mark also the paradisaical state of affairs existing in that "land of the free," where the homes of His Majesty's English subjects for the last forty years have been brightened and their labours sweetened by the spread of free and compulsory elementary education! Verily, besides this, negro slavery seems a thing of liberty and laughter. I put this simple question to my countrymen: Are we prepared to face this state of affairs years hence, when our country is "studded with factories," because twenty years ago Mr. Ranade thought our national welfare depended on the full and many-sided development of our productive power? Must the Moloch of Industrialism eventually bind in his iron service the manhood of India as it has in England for the last few generations? To him thousands upon thousands of men have already been sacrificed there; must he exact a like toll of victims from us? Why, he has already commenced his operations amongst us and relentlessly claimed his due in human flesh and blood. "I have the authority," said Sir N. G. Chandavarkar a few months ago, "of the most popular medical gentleman in the southern Mahratta country for saying that where ten or fifteen years ago there used to be in the villages one case of phthisis there are now ten cases, and he ascribed it, and quite rightly, to the modern temptation for town life. Villagers, anxious for employment, came to Bombay, got employment in the mills, lived in dirty chawls, and afterwards acted as missionaries in the disease. *I am afraid,*" ended Sir Narayanrao with a solemn warning, *"if something is not done to combat the disease by sanatoria and also by diffusing knowledge of the laws of health, TEN YEARS OR TWENTY YEARS HENCE THEY MIGHT ALL BECOME CONSUMPTIVES!"*

I wish I could have had these fateful words printed in red, so that if we could but see in tracing the insidious march of

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our modern Moloch in what dye his feet are steeped—dye of human blood, much to be magnified before it can be discerned,—we should think there might be some loss in his progress. But as it is, the words will mark the monumental folly of the ideal which Sir John Hewett has held up for our national salvation and eternal glorification, and reveal the cold humanity, unabashed vulgarity and cretinous mentality of those swadeshi *videshists* who have been blatantly proclaiming that ideal in public meetings and in newspapers.<sup>1</sup> In this connection most assuredly and with ample justification, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar might have made his memorable pronouncement: "The Hindu community stands condemned of having neglected one of its greatest duties, because of the degradation to which it had subjected those whom it called its members, but whom it had counted off into a heap of mechanism; and it carried on its head a load of sins for having literally bled them to a slow, lingering death." With equal justification and unquestioned appropriateness, Mr. Gokhale might have bemoaned that "there were those who could not understand either the degradation or the inhumanity of the factory-system, to whom the dignity of man as man was an incomprehensible idea and who regarded the poorer classes as made solely to serve and slave for those who were above them." Now, at length, do I begin to comprehend a little the idea of the dignity of man as man!

Having got, as we have, a little insight into the state of affairs at Birmingham and Manchester, we do not at all wonder that Mr. G. K. Chesterton should declare, as he recently did, that all intelligent people in England, Tory and Radical alike, have long come to the conclusion that the mere mechanical expansion of commercialism carried on in the great industrial cities of England is not civilisation, but a very sad sort of savagery. Nor do we wonder that Mr. E. B. Havell should ask us to take heed that we choose wisely when we look to Europe and America for teachers. "None but the ignorant or charlatans will recommend you the paths of Western commercialism as leading to true national prosperity. . . . Nowhere in India—not even in the direst time of famine and pestilence—is there such utter depravity, such hopeless physical, moral and spiritual degradation as that which exists in the great

<sup>1</sup> Only a few months ago the *Bengalee* of Calcutta, referring to the success of the so-called Swadeshi cotton-mills recently started in Bengal, congratulated its readers that "Serampore bids fair to become the Manchester of Bengal."

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commercial cities of Europe, directly brought about by modern industrial methods." This is the true expression of the better mind of Europe, as Lord Morley once pointed out when speaking "on the great feeling prevailing in England—quite beyond the line of party—of pity, of sympathy and horror at the miseries which our industrial system entails."

There is no denying the fact that Industrialism has now taken a hold of India; though the hold at present, no doubt, is very loose, still there are all the signs that as the years roll on it is bound to get closer and closer, until it becomes by the end of the present century as firm and as unrelaxing as it is in many of the foremost States of Europe and America. To think of crushing out Industrialism, so long as present conditions and economic ideals remain unchanged in India, would be as futile as it is foolish. Even to check its onward march is not quite easy; we can only hope to retard its present rate of progress by putting impediments in its way. And there are two ways of doing this. First, by the Government not only discountenancing any scheme of protective tariff, but actually retaining and even increasing the present rate of excise-duty, regardless of the interested clamour of our rich cotton-spinners. Secondly, by the Government making a real effort to bring about the revival of the hand-loom industry, and changing by a net-work of irrigation works the present precarious system of tillage into a reliable and thriving agricultural industry.

Lord Curzon once said that it was inevitable that the hand-loom should be superseded by the power-loom, just as the hand-punkah was being superseded by the electric fan. It is probable that in the weaving of the coarsest kinds of textile required solely for merely utilitarian purposes, such as packing material, gunny bags, etc., the hand-loom will be eventually superseded by the power-loom; but to say that it will be so in the case of all other textiles is to betray the grossest ignorance of the very nature of art. Mere plain weaving on a hand-loom, when the weaver takes interest in his handiwork, is a living artistic work; while the weaving of the most artistically designed piece of the richest tapestry on a power-loom is a dead mechanical operation. "The power-loom will never entirely supersede the hand loom," rightly remarks Mr. Havell, "as long as the desire for beauty is inherent in human nature; and to put forward the doctrine that the hand-loom will be inevitably superseded by the power-loom merely proves how utterly incapable most official experts

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are of understanding India's industrial problem. Every hand-loom weaver who is driven into a power-loom factory is a lowering of India's industrial efficiency, and a depreciation of her artistic, intellectual, and moral standard."

It is not generally known that hand-loom weaving is still the backbone of Indian industry and, as on it mainly rest the means of subsistence of millions of India's handicraftsmen, it is of incomparably greater economic importance than any other. Even to this day, India possesses a most valuable asset in the skill of her handicraftsmen and the heritage of her great artistic traditions. The question with her, therefore, is not of creating the requisite technical skill for her great weaving industry, but of preserving and the accumulated skill of hand and eye which she already possesses from being recklessly wasted for want of organisation and co-operation. That, with the proper organisation of the craftsmen and the active co-operation of Government, this great village industry of India can be revived and made to hold its own against the competition of the power-loom factories, has been amply demonstrated by the successful experiments of Mr. Havell in Bengal and Mr. Maconochie in Western India. By calling public attention to the notable efforts of the 10,000 hand-weavers of the Serampore district—who, by adapting European labour-saving appliances to their traditional craft practice, raised themselves from the state of languishing poverty to a condition of comparative prosperity—and by persuading the Government of Bengal to establish at Serampore a Central Weaving College, Mr. Havell gave a great impetus to the movement for the revival of hand-loom weaving in many different parts of India. Mr. Maconochie, on the other hand, while he was Collector at Sholapore, resuscitated the local weaving industry by the simple expedient of making arrangements to provide the weavers with raw materials on moderate terms, advancing them cash at reasonable rates in the slack season, and enabling them to obtain the best market price for their work. If this can be done without any attempt to improve the methods and appliances of the weavers, it stands to reason that with efficient organisation which gives financial assistance, sound practical training and improved appliances, we may be quite certain of success in spite of Mr. Alfred Chatterton's repeated warning, that the only hope for the hand-loom weaver is to commercialise his industry through the European factory system, and that, to quote his own words, "to attempt to assist the artisans of India and to neglect the

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results of the mercantile efforts of the whole of the last century (in Europe) is to court failure."

Now, coming to the revival of agriculture and taking up the modern cry of "Back to the land," I seem to hear my reader exclaim, "What! Go back to rustication and stagnation and primitive barbarism? No, it is not possible to go back, even if we wanted to. No power on earth can set back the hands of the clock." I don't know anything about setting back the hands of the clock, but I do know it is the cry that has been raised in all ages in certain stages of national evolution. Horace raised it nearly two thousand years ago, when Rome was at the height of its power; Ruskin raised it forty years ago, and one of our most brilliant writers of romance is at the present moment engaged in this momentous question of our age. "The sucking power of the towns," remarked Sir H. Rider Haggard a few months ago, "I consider to be the most serious and vital problem facing civilisation to-day. The supposed advantages of the cities are drawing our people off the land and changing them from solid, steady, dependable men and women to a race of neurotics who will ultimately be unable to cope with the stress of modern conditions. We must at all costs, before it is too late, provide some means of preserving or re-creating a class rooted in the land. The trend of people from the land to the cities has always preceded the downfall of nations, and there is no reason for supposing that Nature will alter her rule in this respect." Rider Haggard is no idle dreamer, no mere theorist in the back to the land movement, but a man who, through years of practical experience and patient study of the problem as it presents itself in many parts of the world, has come to hold definite views on it, and now gives his time, money, and the influence of his name to further the work he has at heart. At his home, Ditchingham House, Norfolk, he farms about 600 acres, keeps a large herd of cows, and sends milk to the London market.

But Rider Haggard is by no means the only one of our eminent men, possessing the priceless gift of foresight, to sound the alarm, but many others now and again venture to lift their manly voices against the fatal magnetism—this relentless sucking power of our modern towns; but they might as well have spared their breath for something more immediately useful, for the warning falls on ears rendered for all practical purposes deaf to all sounds except to the eternal clanking and infernal groaning of the all-triumphant modern Industrialism. To give an instance, many months ago Dr. Max Nordau

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ventured to open the subject in the pages of the *Hibbert Journal*. Except that a newspaper here and there, for lack of more interesting matter and in order to fill up its columns, published a few paragraphs from it, this important article passed to all intents and purposes to the limbo of oblivion. But the article deserves more than a passing notice, and so I shall make here lengthy extracts from it.

"The work done in the civilised world to-day is incomparably greater than at any former time. Even the poorest workman who is not a beggar, but earns his own living, makes greater demands on his existence than his forefathers did, and the rise in his standard of life imposes correspondingly greater efforts upon him, since it is not compensated by the general rise in wages.

"The dominant part played in production by the machine, to a mere attendant on which man in the factory has been degraded, and the ever-increasing division of labour, which condemns the worker to an eternal, automatic repetition of a small number of movements, and reduces the part taken in his work by the intellectual faculties to a minimum, wears him out one-sidedly, and therefore quicker and more completely than is the case when, with a varied, manifold activity, which calls in turn upon different groups of muscles and requires the continual intervention of imagination, judgment and will, he manufactures some complicated object of common use from the raw material up to the perfect article.

"In even greater numbers the population makes its way from the country to the town, to exchange agricultural occupations for labour in workshops and factories. The number of people that dwell in towns of over 100,000 inhabitants is everywhere swelling; everywhere among civilised nations the tendency appears to transform a people that lives on the land and raises natural products into a people of great cities, producing differentiated goods.

"*The whole end of civilisation seems to be economic.* All progress aims at facilitating and augmenting the production of goods. That in this process the individual is being worn out is not considered. The world-economy does not ask whether it enhances the happiness of the single human being. It produces wealth, and sets this on a level with happiness—a manifest illusion.

"The peasant is attracted to the town because he is hypnotised by the figure of industrial wages, which he compares with the pay for agricultural labour, or the net profits of a small farmer.



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He does not understand or consider that the higher wage is set off by incomparably higher expenses, and that more money will buy less pleasure and bodily prosperity in the town than less money in the country. He is enticed, moreover, by the excitement, the variety, the amusements which the town offers, and he does not see that these doubtful advantages are balanced by quite certain disadvantages—periodic unemployment, a shorter working life, a poor and forsaken old age, and a permanent dependence on great industries and unsentimental enterprise between which and the workers there exists no thread of human, personal relation.

“For the present, the country population is still capable of feeding the large towns. But the day will come when the depopulated country will have no more reinforcements to bestow on the great city, and then the danger of national degeneration will have come very near to us. This danger will be European in its scope, since one people after another is adopting the large town civilisation, and the white race has no more barbarians in reserve to step into the weakened ranks and fill up their gaps.”

But it will be asked, has not the large town been from time immemorial the focus of civilisation? Have not some of the greatest men of the world, from Socrates downwards, lived in large towns and there thought out the great thoughts that have influenced the mind of mankind ever afterwards? Are not the inventors that endow the world with new modes of life, the investigators that enrich it with new scientific truths, and the poets and artists that adorn it with new beauty, almost all dwellers in the large town, and was not their genius first kindled by its air? I should not care to dispute this argument, which, however, seems to assume a good deal, though it would be quite as easy to prove by examples, from those of our Rishis downwards, that the truth on the whole lies substantially on the other side. I would only ask the questioner to count up the price—the fearful price we have to pay for this intensification of mental activity. Does not the large town give the highest percentage of crime, insanity, and constitutional diseases? Is not the large town the focus of all the frenzies of fashion, and all the follies and fantasticalities of public opinion, of all the frightful degeneracy in morality and all the hysterical aberrations in politics? “It is in the large town,” says Dr. Max Nordau, “that celibacy and childlessness are most to be found. In the large towns the tall races are dwarfed: not, indeed, among the patrician class, which has country houses and only

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spends a part of the year in the town, but among the multitude that is born in the town, lives there, and dies there." Is there any remedy for this state of affairs? "I fear," remarks Dr. Nordau, "that in the present state of science and of culture, in the present political and economical constitution of society, we must answer—No. The world economy will not dispense with the division of labour, with its great material advantages, and will never return to the idyllic style of production of which Ruskin dreamed, where every workman thinks out with his own head, as a creative artist, the product of his industry, gives his heart to his work and carries it out with his own hands. In the stress of intensive modern culture the people that take the lead must needs wear themselves out. Only if they had the courage to retard the rhythm of their economic progress, only then could they retain their health and their full powers. They cannot," concludes Dr. Nordau, "at the same time be rich and able, shine and endure, but only the one or the other."

Some economists, like Prof. Nicholson, have striven to prove the indisputable superiority of the factory system over the cottage industry as regards shorter hours of work, regularity of employment, the healthier atmosphere and all-round better conditions under which work is carried on. This, to a certain extent, is undoubtedly true as far as the production of coarser kinds of goods is concerned, where the operative is not required to make the slightest use of his brains or his artistic faculties. But where the use of the brains and of the artistic faculties is imperative the factory system has gradually brought about the complete ruin of one industrial art after another, and as our traditional art industries make great demands on the head and heart of the craftsman, nowhere is the system likely to prove in the end more ruinous than in India. What Sir George Birdwood—by far the greatest authority on the industrial arts of India—said long ago in this connexion deserves our most careful attention, as it becomes increasingly true with the increasing factorisation of India—

"What is chiefly to be dreaded is the general introduction of machinery into India. We are just beginning in Europe to understand what things must be done by machinery, and what must be done by hand-work, if art is the slightest consideration in the matter. But if, owing to the operation of certain economic causes, machinery were to be gradually introduced into India for the manufacture of its great traditional handicrafts, there would ensue an industrial revolution which, if not directed by an intelligent and instructed public opinion and the general

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prevalence of refined taste, would inevitably throw the traditional arts of the country into the same confusion of principles, and of their practical application to the objects of daily necessity, which has for three generations been the destruction of decorative art and of middle-class taste in England and North-Western Europe and the United States of America.

"The social and moral evils of the introduction of machinery into India are likely to be still greater. At present the industries of India are carried on all over the country, although hand-weaving is everywhere languishing in the unequal competition with Manchester and the Presidency mills. But in every Indian village all the traditional handicrafts are still to be found at work

"Outside the entrance of the single village street, on an exposed rise of ground, the hereditary potter sits by his wheel moulding the swift revolving clay by the natural curves of his hands. At the back of the houses, which form the low irregular street, there are two or three looms at work in blue, and scarlet, and gold, the frames hanging between the acacia trees, the yellow flowers of which drop fast on the webs as they are being woven. In the street the brass and copper smiths are hammering away at their pots and pans, and further down, in the verandah of the rich man's house, is the jeweller working rupees and gold mohurs into fair jewellery, gold and silver earrings, and round tires like the moon, bracelets, and tablets, and nose rings, and tinkling ornaments for the feet, taking his designs from the fruits and flowers around him, or from the traditional forms represented in the paintings and carvings of the great temple, which rises over the groves of mangoes and palms at the end of the street above the lotus covered village tank. At half past three or four in the afternoon the whole street is lighted up by the moving robes of the women going down to draw water from the tank; each with two or three water jars on her head, and so, while they are going and returning in single file, the scene glows like Titian's canvas, and moves like the stately procession of the Panathenaic *frieze*. Later, the men drive in the wild grey kine from the moaning plain, the looms are folded up, the coppersmiths are silent, the elders gather in the gate, the lights begin to glimmer in the fast falling darkness, the feasting and the music are heard on every side, and late into the night the songs are sung from the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata*. The next morning with sunrise, after the simple ablutions and adorations performed in the open air before the houses, the same day begins again. This

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is the daily life going on all over Western India in the village communities of the Dekhan, among a people happy in their simple manners and frugal way of life, and in the culture derived from the grand epics of a religion in which they live, and move, and have their daily being, and in which the highest expression of their literature, art, and civilisation has been stereotyped for three thousand years.

"But of late years these handicraftsmen, for the sake of whose works the whole world has been ceaselessly pouring its bullion for three thousand years into India, and who, for all the marvellous tissue and embroidery they have wrought, have polluted no rivers, deformed no pleasing prospects, nor poisoned any air; whose skill and individuality the training of countless generations has developed to the highest perfection, these hereditary handicraftsmen are being everywhere gathered from their democratic village communities in hundreds and thousands into the colossal mills of Bombay, to drudge in gangs for tempting wages, at manufacturing piece goods, in competition with Manchester, in the production of which they are no more intellectually and morally concerned than the grinder of a barrel-organ in the tunes turned out from it.

"I do not mean to depreciate the proper functions of machines in modern civilisation, but machinery should be the servant and never the master of men. It cannot minister to the beauty and pleasure of life, it can only be the slave of life's drudgery; and it should be kept rigorously in its place, in India as well as England. When in England machinery is, by the force of cultivated taste and opinion, no longer allowed to intrude into the domain of art manufactures, which belongs exclusively to the trained mind and hand of individual workmen, wealth will become more equally diffused throughout society, and the working classes, through the elevating influence of their daily work, and the growing respect for their talent, and skill, and culture, will rise at once in social, civil, and political position, raising the whole country, to the highest classes, with them; and Europe will learn to taste of some of that content and happiness in life which is to be still found in the pagan East, as it was once found in pagan Greece and Rome."

These remarks were made nearly forty years ago, and it is the easiest thing in the world to pass by them with sneers about the "sentimentalism of the dilettante," but how truly prophetic they were may be seen by the fact that many of the art-industries that were just beginning to decay, and a few

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more which were even flourishing, have now, for all practical purposes, died out. The exquisitely beautiful picture that Sir George has painted of the typical Indian village is by no means untrue to nature either in colour or proportion, as most of his modern unimaginative, unimpressionable readers are likely to believe from their superficial acquaintance with Indian village-life.

I have walked hundreds of miles in the Salsette and Thana districts, and round Lanouli and down the seven fertile valleys of Mahableshwar, visiting scores of villages on my rambles, talking to their simple-minded dwellers and striving to enter into the spirit of their life by lowering the plane of my mind to their own level,—from which experience of mine, extending over many years, I have no hesitation in asserting that Sir George Birdwood's description of the Indian village is substantially correct, though I cannot lay my finger on any particular village and say—this is Sir George's typical Indian village.

For all the old-world charms of the Indian village, I was not slow to notice the weeds and nameless refuse that surrounded most of its huts, of which the front portion, where the cattle were tied, was foul and evil-smelling, the roof was low, and the "chambers," in some cases, dark, empty and joyless, and, in the meanest huts, whatever there was of light and air gleamed and filtered through the crannies of the mud walls, and, to cap all, the occupants, in most cases, looked indigent, famished and unintelligent. *But all this means nothing* when we consider that the simple villagers pass their whole day in the open air under the full blaze of an Eastern sun, engaged in healthy occupations that do not harry the nerves, nor leave them thoroughly exhausted after the day's work is done. If there is sometimes hardship or anxiety, there is always innocence and peace and the fellowship of the human soul with the spirit of nature,—with the rivulet that passed by the village or the noble and age worn trees that stood outside the door, or the domesticated animals that lay within it. If they never enjoy a full meal, they have invariably enough to sustain them for the simple work they have to do. If they never have strong muscular bodies, they always

"The best of all the things that God has made,  
Is that good man that I have made,  
But give me a little more, a little more,  
And I'll be a good man, too."  
—*The Good Man*

*The Good Man*

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have superabundance of stamina to carry them over long stretches of hills and valleys without ever knowing what it is to be out of breath or done up.<sup>1</sup> If they have little to put on, the rigours of climate need not much. And with their daily ablutions, their unclad bodies do not present a disagreeable aspect. If they understand but dimly our virtues, they yet faithfully keep to their own crude morality. If they have no hope of advancement, neither have they any fear of being beaten down in the race of life. Love, patience, hospitality and, above all, a living faith—these things they all have. To plough the field of his father, to reap the harvest side by side, to bear the burden up the mountain side, to cull a flower or two for his Hari or Vithoba in the mornings, and to pass his evenings in the little gossip of the village-world,—these are the simple blessings of the lowly Indian peasant which taught even toil to please, and in his living faith whatever ill befell his path, he never stopped to question, but folded his hands and sighed—*Eshwarachee murjee* ("Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.") "Printing press and publishers," once said a truly noble-minded Englishman, ". . . both leave him unmoved. Happy, twice happy mortal, far removed from the world's din! Neither fame nor fortune, as we count these things, will ever be yours. To die unwept and unhonoured is your fate. Not unsung, however, for whoever sees you must needs sing in his own heart, though the music reach no other ears. Illimitable expanse, cradle of boyhood, full of sunshine, of colour, of happiness—and of misery. I, who know London and Paris, Art and Literature, lovely women and gallant men, I, the heir to all the ages, bow myself down in reverence and awe before thee—fain would I always dwell with thee. For the cities of the West, Art and Literature, gallant men and lovely women, all wear masks. We chase the shadow and miss the substance. We take the mask for the man. Here the man without the mask is to be found. Full of happiness—and of misery. Dirty little mud huts, human beings and animals huddled together, the perpetual sameness of things—these look like misery to us, the children of the mask. But to those who have never known otherwise, is it misery to them? Happiness and misery, who can define these states? Is it the possession of money with its cares and its duties, or perchance the

<sup>1</sup> "The natives of this country are our masters in the art of climbing. We envy them their endurance, but still more their machinery of heart and lungs. They do not know what it is to be 'out of breath,' or 'pumped out.'"—James Douglas's *Bombay and Western India*, II.

liquor-shop. The invitation is too urgent to be refused, and so they step in and have a small glass of strong drink which takes away a sixth to even a quarter of their day's hard earnings. Judging from the expression of their faces, they evidently do not enjoy drinking the decoction offered to them, but it has one happy result. It rouses their drooping spirits, and for some time at any rate brings on them a happy self-forgetfulness. From the shop they walk home. Home!—it would be desecration to call their dark holes by that hallowed name. Holes that are so small and so ill-ventilated that not a few of these poor wretches have to fling themselves down on the pavement outside, and snatch a few hours' rest in the intervals granted in their eternal round of unceasing toil. Only a few days ago an article appeared in the *Times of India*, entitled "A Visit to Bombay Slums," from which I make the following extract—

"It has often been said that one half of the world knows not how the other half lives, and probably of no city can this be said with greater truth than of Bombay. Those thousands of mill-hands who pour out of the mills of the city—where and how do they live? . . . Almost anywhere in the Indian quarters in Bombay may be found almost compact masses of dwellings divided by only narrow gullies. These gullies may be two feet wide, or as much as ten feet, but invariably they are abominably filthy, and any efforts which the Municipal sweeper may make to keep them clean are hopeless. On either side of the gullies rise the walls of the dwellings, sometimes to the height of four storeys, and generally speaking the only light which enters the rooms which face these gullies is that which penetrates through apertures many feet above—apertures which more often than not are almost covered by projecting eaves. That is the only light which enters the rooms, and the only air is the foul air from the gullies which compels the occupants to close the windows. The results can be imagined, but the house must be entered in order that the full effect may be appreciated. In quite a number of the houses which were inspected on Wednesday scarcely a glimmer of light penetrated into the rooms on the ground floor facing the gully. Open the door and try and peer through the darkness. It might well be a coal-hole, but as the eye grows accustomed to the darkness human forms may be distinguished. Strike a match, and the room will be found to measure about eight feet square, and here it is that in the darkness of night, and amid smells the variety

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and intensity of which it would be nauseating to describe, even if it were possible, that a family of human beings lives and dies!"

Where are our Free-education-mongers? Where are our great Mahar-apostles? What! is there not one among the sickly lot of our humanitarians and sentimentalists to champion the cause of India's Slaves? Cannot even one of them perceive the frightful inhumanity of counting off hundreds of thousands of our fellow-men into a heap of mechanism, numbered with its wheels, and weighed with its hammer strokes? In this connection Mr. Gokhale might have truly said: "Every feeling of justice, every sentiment of humanity must impel us to press forward with this problem. That thousands upon thousands of our people should be sunk in unspeakable squalor, and their limbs turned into levers to move machinery with—I can think of no injustice more cruel and monstrous than this."

Another great argument against the rapid extension of the modern factory system in India is that it is entirely opposed to the spirit of the East. Of late we have been constantly hearing of the awakening of the East from its long slumber and its gradually adopting Western modes of life and thinking. This is partly true as far as the superficial standards of life and thought are concerned. But at heart there is and there ever will be a deep-seated, inherent, insuperable difference between the East and the West. To find the motive of life, in spite of all indications to the contrary, the East in the end will ever turn inward, the West in the end ever outward—



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This scheme of life of restless ambition and active competition, though harmful in itself, is not unsuited to the energetic and pushful people of the West, bent on making their way in the world and securing its good things. But, to the people of the East who are comparatively less energetic and less pushful and whose ideal of life can never be wholly satisfied with the best things that the world has to offer, a scheme of life involving strenuous struggle for existence is entirely unsuited and likely to prove in the end wholly mischievous. The great and fundamental truth which Count Hermann Keyserling once urged on his Chinese audience and which is shared by all the deepest thinkers of the West—that TO WESTERNISE THE EAST IS TO DESTROY IT, and that if China supplanted her own culture by the Western one it would not progress—is equally true of India. "No one can live a life," maintained the Count, "foreign from his own. Every one of our Western accomplishments is the outcome of a long history, and means very much more, therefore, than it appears to mean. *If now another nation adopts this Western culture, just as it is, it will get it, not as a living but as a dead body.* To be of any value at all it must be attached to its own root. In China this means that all reforms, all improvements, must be made in the spirit of its own wonderful civilisation and not after the pattern of a Western one. It is quite impossible to obtain practical results from another basis or spirit. If modern China fails to understand this, if it breaks off from the ancient root, its apparent progress will mean nothing less than disintegration. The great culture of the past will be lost, and there will be no other culture to replace it."

These are wise words, and are as applicable to India and other Asiatic countries as to China. *To revive the old ideals and to adapt them to new forms is the way to wisdom.*

When I said above that to the people of the East a scheme of life involving strenuous struggle for existence was entirely unsuited, I meant, of course, the mass of the people. Surely I know that to the capitalists and the rich factory owners such a scheme is something indispensable—something on which their power and position in life entirely rest. Consequently, if any one dared to suggest that measures should be taken to save India from the curse of a full-grown, wide spreading and in the end irrepressible Industrialism, they would at once raise a hue and cry and would have no end of specious arguments against the entertainment of any such suggestion which would mean the ruin of India's nascent industries, of her Capital,

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Enterprise and Skill, and end in permanently relegating her to the position of a backward nation.

Educated Indians, if they choose, may worthily take up this cry and, following the noble precept of Sir John Hewett, beautify vast tracts of their country with FACTORY-CHIMNEYS and MINE PITS after the manner of the flourishing countries of modern Europe. But all India cannot become a factory or a mine. And while hundreds of thousands of Indians, sacrificing themselves to the patriotic purpose of developing the Skill, Industry and Enterprise of their country, will live diminished lives in the midst of noise, of darkness, and of deadly exhalation, millions upon millions of untutored peasants in the far away mountains will still rejoice as they gather the harvest bathed in the golden blaze of the sun, and at night when the harvest moon creeps up the shouts of their praise and the clash of their cymbals will still resound through the valleys as of old !

*POLITICAL FUTURE*  
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## CHAPTER IV

### POLITICAL FUTURE

WHEN at a political meeting many years ago, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman said that "Good government can never be a substitute for government by the people themselves," that statement was hailed in India by the most progressive sections of her people as an unimpeachable doctrine of wise and liberal statesmanship which ought to find ready acceptance with any Government wishing to conduct its affairs in the light of day. Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji prefixed this dictum to the address he delivered as the President of the Indian National Congress of 1906, and over and over again in the course of that lengthy address the Grand Old Man maintained that one of the fundamental objects, if not the very end and aim, of the Congress was to bring about the realisation of that glorious ideal in the constitution of the Government of India. And when the Hon. Mr. Gokhale in his presidential address gave expression to his own idea as to what should be the goal of the Congress, he was only gathering in the broad outlines of Sir Henry's dictum within the narrow limits of a definite ideal. In the constitution which the Moderate Party drew up after Mr. Tilak had broken up its annual sessions at Surat, the goal of the Congress, as laid down by Mr. Gokhale, was embodied in the following terms—

"The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and the participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms."

If we put the great dictum of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in plain, unequivocal terms it comes to this,—that if a choice were given between good government and self-government, our choice should fall on self-government. And if questioned, why? The reply is immediately forthcoming—

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that it is the only form of government under which all the finer traits of an individual's character get the best chance of showing forth, free and unfettered, and of being put to the best uses of the nation at large. This is why they pontifically proclaim: "We treat self government as a blessing and a healing, a sobering and a strengthening influence." That self-government has achieved all these wonderful results on paper may be at once admitted, but whether it has done so or not on historical evidence or in the opinion of those who are best fitted to judge these things,—it is open to grave doubt. One has only to unwind the rolls of the later Greek and Roman annals and of the mediæval Italian republics, not to speak of some well-known chapters in the history of France and even of England, to get some idea of the follies and excesses to which every species of self-government that has hitherto been tried, has been carried. Plato and Dante, Bacon and Goethe, Shakespeare and Ibsen have all equally shown their distrust of all democratic forms of government. I have already spoken at great length, while on the subject of Elementary Education, of the aversion of more recent thinkers in England to the very principle on which those forms of government are based and the contempt and derision with which these men systematically treat the so-called aspirations of the mob.

As against them, I should like to know the name of even one great thinker who has spoken lightly of good government or given self government a preference over it.

"For forms of government let fools contest ;  
That which is best administered is best "

Than these there are no wiser words among the many wise ones of the most rational and keen sighted of old English men of the world! For, indeed, no form of government, however perfect, is of any use when incompetent men are at the head of affairs; and any form, howsoever imperfect, will work in the hands of capable statesmen. If this is admitted, it follows of itself that good government is all in all and of primary consideration, while its form and the colour and class of people by which it is carried out is entirely a secondary question. Hence "the wise and statesmanlike dictum of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman" is not only not wise nor statesmanlike, but is, on the contrary, the most pernicious doctrine in politics that has ever been propounded by a responsible statesman, and nowhere is its reiteration more dangerous or less reprehensible than in

India. Much to my regret, I recently heard the opinion reiterated by unquestionably the greatest of our public men, though in a slightly different form. The Hon. Mr. Gokhale, replying to the toast of his health at the farewell dinner given to him at the Ripon Club last year, said among other things that we were striving to get a form of government which would be in keeping with the self-respect and dignity of a civilised people. Does the hon. gentleman mean to suggest that the present form of government in India is *not* in keeping with the self-respect and dignity of a civilised people? I don't see what other construction could be put on those words, or how they could possibly be explained away so as to remove all suggestion of ill-will towards the Government as it is now constituted which a sun-baked Anglo-Indian, not sufficiently acquainted with the long and honourable career of Mr. Gokhale, is likely to trace, and excusably, in those ill chosen words of his.

Having seen that good government is always to be preferred to any form of government, popular or otherwise, let us inquire how far popular or self-government is practicable in India. In other words, let us ask,—is it possible for the diverse races of India to become one united self-governing community? This question has been variously answered by different schools of political thought in India. Leaving the Extremists aside, the Moderates, or members of the National Congress Party, stoutly maintain not only the possibility but the absolute certainty of India becoming one united self-governing community. "Oh," they exclaim with easy assurance, "it is only a question of time and persistent agitation—that's all." In this fashion the Moderates go on, in season and out of season, and, like Burke's birds of evil presage, grate on our ears at all times with their melancholy song of grievances and aspirations, yet not one of their recognised Indian leaders has ever attempted to put before the public in a careful and exhaustive disquisition all the undeniable facts and arguments that may be advanced in support of their cause. However, a young man of their party made one such attempt four years ago, but such is the wonderful power of appreciation of these leaders that, though in acuteness of intellect the author is equal to most of them and in power of expression second to none, his splendid talents are left unrecognised and his youthful enthusiasm allowed to run waste. Mr. H. P. Mody's treatment of this wide and intricate subject in his *Political Future of India*, in spite of much special pleading, glaring false analogies and inexcusable

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disregard of certain fundamental facts, has yet so much and in such eminent degree of what Matthew Arnold calls "sweet reasonableness" that we cannot pass by it without considering his persuasive arguments by means of which he finds no difficulty in proving that Indian nationality and self-government are both practicable and not far removed from our sight. Taking up first the question of Indian nationality, Mr. Mody frankly admits that two of the essential elements in the formation of a nation—community of race and community of religion—India has not, though he partly gets over the difficulty by maintaining that these *essential* elements are *not* indispensable in these days of religious toleration and when instances could be given of different nationalities living side by side without injuring the unity of the State, citing as examples the peoples of Switzerland, Germany, and the United States of America. Mr. Mody further maintains that however divided the people may be, the division between one community of India and another is not so great as between the Indian and the Englishman. The third element in the formation of a national spirit is community of language. This would appear at first glance an unsurmountable obstacle when we have more than one hundred dialects in India, but the spread of English, contends Mr. Mody, has already partially removed the obstacle, and with its gradual diffusion among the masses it will ultimately supply us, *i.e.* three hundred million people, with a common speech. The fourth element of nationality—the community of historical antecedents—exists in India, says Mr. Mody, though he freely recognises that its force is weak. So well-known are these antecedents that Mr. Mody quite rightly does not wish to burden his pages with giving a list of them, but passes on, wisely contenting himself with making a vague reference to the cult of Sivajee, to Akbar as a universal benefactor and to "the ancient glory and prosperity of the fatherland."

Having thus proved by a series of closely reasoned arguments to his own and his reader's satisfaction, the possibility of there arising in India a nationality, to turn that mere possibility into an absolute certainty and to meet all possible forms of opposition from any of his still unconvinced readers, Mr. Mody marshals before him the rest of his formidable host of *Common* influences; such as common grievances and common aims, common laws and common rights; a common country and a common system of government, etc., etc. To demonstrate how common grievances act as a cohesive force, Mr. Mody

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"We will fight tooth and nail over Swadeshi, Swarāj, or the Congress Presidentship. But let the University Bill be passed into law, and we are up in arms together. Let Lord Curzon revile the educated classes, and the Extremist and Moderate will equally protest against it. . . . It is foolish, then, to argue that there is no political unity among Indians. . . . But look upon the educated classes as the indicators of the prevailing tendencies, and there will hardly be room for doubt that the evolution of the diverse races of India into a politically united community must come in the fulness of time."

And this fulness of time, according to Mr. Mody, is *at least* half a century.

Then Mr. Mody goes on to discuss the requisites of self-government, and says they are unity, intellectual capacity, and character. The first requisite, as he has already said, India does not possess for the present, but it "is in sight." As to the second requisite, Mr. Mody, after giving a long list of eminent Indians who have held high administrative posts or otherwise distinguished themselves in various walks of life, remarks "it is absurd to say that the educated native is not capable after this practical testimony." Then he goes to the third essential condition of self-government, and inquires into the three charges of untruthfulness, servility, and corruption that are usually levelled against Indians and comes to the conclusion that though the charges are not quite unfounded, still the natives of India are not more guilty of any of them than the nations of the West. Having thus examined all the three requisites of self-government, Mr. Mody has no hesitation in maintaining that within certain limits the people of India possess all of them. The difficulties in the way of attaining self-government are the unfortunate differences between the Hindus and Mohammedans, the ignorance of the masses, and the evils of our peculiar social system. Then Mr. Mody brings up before us Macaulay, Halliday, and Gladstone to prove the great dictum of the Congress Party that England's mission in India is to qualify the Indians to govern themselves. When Macaulay says that it will be the proudest day in the annals of England when Indians instructed in European knowledge crave for European institutions, he "prophesies with the vision of a seer," and every Englishman is most earnestly asked to bear in mind the noble words of that seer and sage; but when that same Macaulay most impertinently tries to look a little too closely into the character of the Bengalees and says, "There never, perhaps, existed a people so thoroughly fitted



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alike and having one religion, the stability of the German federal system is due entirely to Prussia, which forces and keeps under its heels all the lesser States by its superior military power and its preponderating influence in the councils of the Empire. The United States of America, with its variety of peoples forming one self-governing community, presents a somewhat closer analogy to India. Of its seventy-eight millions, the bulk are descendants of British colonists and immigrants, and consequently they are a dominating factor in the State. This virile and robust stock has imposed its language and its government on all the minor races, such as Latin, German, and Scandinavian, whom it has also absorbed with the exception of the negro and the Red Indian. Though for the last two hundred years the negroes have had the same government, language, and religion as the white Americans, they cannot be assimilated by the latter, and consequently form a separate and distinct nationality which, were it possible, would separate entirely and evolve some form of government of its own. Even the later immigrants from the different races of Europe do not so readily commingle with the preponderating Anglo Saxon stock, and are already giving indications of their secession by forming their own distinct colonies where their own language, customs, and characteristics are being perpetuated. The present Balkan War shows the force and vitality of racial instincts and is a striking instance of the disintegrating tendency along racial lines which is observable among the States of Europe. Norway has thrown off the yoke of Sweden and is determined to work out her own destiny. It is mainly due to the personality of the Austrian Emperor that Hungary forms a part of the Austrian Empire. The seeming political unity of different races—Magyars and Slavs, Germans and Czechs—in the dual monarchy will break up at the first convenient opportunity after the central figure of the old Emperor is removed from the political arena. Ireland is fairly on the way to secure independent government, and there is already a talk of Scottish Home Rule, and Wales is not backward in asserting its own distinct nationality. The inference from all the above instances is that even favourable circumstances of common country and common government, common rights and common grievances, common law and common aspirations, far from "supplying the defects of diversity of race," make the difficulty of diverse races coalescing to form a united self-governing community only too apparent, by bringing on the surface the underlying tendency of different races to separate and to work out each its own salvation independently of the

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From the above it follows that such terms as "People of India" and "Natives of India" are both meaningless and misleading in the sense in which they are frequently used—namely, when applied indiscriminately to all the inhabitants of this vast continent. To put under the same category peoples so diametrically opposed as the valiant Sikh and the cowardly Marwaree, the sturdy Gurkha and the effeminate Bengalee, the fiery Pathan and the feeble Jain, the chivalrous Rajput and the scheming Mahratta, the enlightened Parsi of Bombay and the fossilised Brahmin of South India, would even in a comedy be considered ludicrous enough to convulse us in rounds of laughter, but to tack them together under the same label in a serious political treatise sounds so childish as to move us to tears rather than laughter. We might as well speak of the "natives of Europe," and, though the phrase is unintelligible, it would not be nearly so meaningless nor so ridiculous as the natives of India, for there is a certain general resemblance in the build of body, habits of mind and vigour of character between the sprightly Frenchman and the gruff Muscovite, between the open hearted Norwegian and the secretive Neapolitan. No intelligent man would dispute for a moment that a native of Calcutta or Madras is more a foreigner to the hardy races of Northern India than an Englishman. And it would be no exaggeration to say that to the Parsi an Englishman is less a foreigner than a Hindu or a Mohammedan in spite of the fact that he has lived among them for the last twelve hundred years. Speaking from personal experience, I can quite enter into the thoughts and feelings of the English people, and felt myself quite at home in every part of England, but strive as I will I cannot completely understand nor can entirely sympathise with many of the ways and habits of the people among whom I have lived and moved for the last thirty years. And I remember, when I toured through Northern and Southern India, I found myself in most places a stranger, and felt as if I were moving among alien people with whom I had nothing in common.

It is, therefore, incorrect to call Englishmen "foreigners" in India in the same sense as they are called, for instance, in Paris or Berlin. In fact, it is misleading to call any one foreigner in India, for then, rightly speaking, most of the peoples of India would be foreigners to each other. The Moghuls were a foreign power, and so were all their predecessors ever since the time of Sabaktigin, a thousand years ago. "The English," rightly remarks Sceley, "did not introduce a foreign domination

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into India, for the foreign domination was there already." Even in the existing Native States the rulers and principal native officials are often as much foreigners to their subjects as the English are to theirs. The most prominent example is the premier ruling state of Deccan Hyderabad. Nearly the whole population is Hindu, yet the ruler, the principal officials and the army almost entirely consist of Mohammedan foreigners. To a great extent the same may be said of the States of Gwalior, Indore and Baroda, whose rulers, as Sir Lepel Griffin remarked years ago, "are the representatives of the predatory hordes which, until crushed by British arms, turned the fertile plains of Central India into a wilderness. These Mahratta dynasties have *nothing in common* with the people they govern. Their race is different, and their language is not understood."

Let us then be fair and accept facts as they stand, and cease to call anybody "foreigner" in India. Mr. Mody and most writers of his party most justly resent the Indians being called "natives," as the term "carries with it associations which the uninformed mind finds it hard to dispel." May not a similar argument be advanced for the discontinuance of the use of such terms as "a foreign government" and "an alien bureaucracy" with reference to the English officials, as they carry with them associations which must necessarily tend to prejudice the minds of the uninformed against their rulers? We all know the pain of accepting a new idea, but it is time we made a real attempt to give up our old cherished habit of looking upon the English as foreigners. We must henceforth consider them as they really are—one of our own numerous peoples. They must form an integral, nay dominant, factor in any future political arrangement, and unless we take this fundamental fact into calculation, all our deeply thought-out conjectures about "the Political Future of India" will turn out after all to be pure conjectures, and serve only to unsettle and inflame the minds of thoughtless youths against the government established by law, and make them foolishly cherish hopes of one day throwing off "the hated foreign yoke" and becoming independent and establishing *swarāj*—hopes which, under the peculiar and unalterable conditions of India, need only to be stated to be condemned.

Let us now take the third element which, according to Mr. Mody, goes to form national unity—namely, Community of language. Mr. Mody believes that with the gradual diffusion of English among the masses, that language will ultimately

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supply us with that common speech which is so necessary for our progress. One's acquaintance with the history of different languages must be rather limited to have faith in such a hope. At any rate, the fate of Latin, if it teaches us one sure lesson, teaches us this—that it is impossible for the language of the learned to filter down to the lower classes and supplant the native languages of the masses. In fact, such is the native vigour of an indigenous language that, far from allowing the learned language to displace it, it makes, on the contrary, inroads into the learned language, saps its vitality and supplants it completely in the end. Witness the displacement of Latin and French in England, of Latin in France, and even in Italy—the land of its birth. We need not bring examples from past ages to prove the reality of the tendency, for we notice the same tendency even at the present moment. I believe up to lately English was compulsorily taught in all primary schools in Great Britain and Ireland. But while travelling in Ireland I was told by two Irish priests that this regulation caused so much inconvenience among the Irish peasant classes that it had to be given up, and now native Irish is taught in most of the village schools. In Wales and, I believe, also in Scotland a similar agitation has been started for the teaching of the native languages in the lower schools instead of English. When English meets with this treatment at its very threshold, among the masses of the people allied to the English for centuries together by every tie of historical association, to talk of its “gradual diffusion among the masses” of a Dependency half the world across, and providing them finally with “a common speech,” is, to put it mildly, sheer nonsense. “How weary a step do those take who endeavour to make out of a great mass a true political personality!” Never did I more fully understand those words of Burke than I do now, never certainly did they come home to me with greater force than when I followed the weary steps of Mr. Mody in his really heroic endeavours to make out of the great mass of India a true political personality.<sup>1</sup>

I am glad Mr. Mody should have brought in this argument of “community of language,” for he thereby most

<sup>1</sup> And matters are not improved by turning to the last census report, which shows that considerably over ninety per cent. of the people are unable to read and write even their own dialects, and of the remaining literate *half* a fifteenth part—a large number of which, be it remembered, is made up of European residents—knows English.

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innocently lets us into the secret of the method by which our young politicians draw up their paper constitutions. These young men get hold of some book on the theory of the State,—a book, for instance, like Bluntschli's *Theory of the State*,—hurriedly turn up the chapter on "the conceptions of people and nation," take down seriatim the tests given therein by which a "nation" might unmistakably be distinguished from a mere "people," and then set about applying these tests to India. Being determined by some means or other to conjure up a nation out of the heterogeneous mass of Indian humanity, they find no difficulty in proving, by stretching a point here and overlooking a fact there, that most of the important tests will be answered and most satisfactorily in the near future, though for the present one may have to rest satisfied with giving instances "which indicate the actual awakening, however partial, of a national consciousness among the people." In their list of "tests" quite an important position is given to community of language, because their copy-book says that "common language is the special characteristic of a nation." But here they are confronted with a most formidable difficulty,—fifty languages stare them in the face!—sufficient to strike a chill into the heart of the most consummate political theorist. But nothing can daunt our political enthusiasts. They, with the magic of youth, manage to jump over obstacles where an aged Abbé Sieyès or a Bismarck would assuredly have stumbled. They scan over the fifty swadeshi languages; finding not one of them could ever be expected to fulfil "the third special characteristic of a nation," they throw them all away on the muck-heap, and, in spite of their rooted dislike for all that is "alien" and "foreign," when it suits their purpose our Nationalists do not in the least scruple to adopt a *foreign* tongue for their national language. And if they did scruple, as the true-hearted and courageous Nationalist Dr. Coomaraswamy actually does, one would understand their scruples; for of all kinds of domination of one people over another—political, economic, social, etc.—the subtlest and most formidable is that of Intellect. And nothing would be more calculated to facilitate such an insidious domination of India than the wide-spread adoption of the tongue of the dominant people. Thought is, and ever will be, the ruling force in the world. Consequently, if the power of Indian thought were allowed to be extinguished and the creative faculties of the East to stagnate by her gradual Westernisation,

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even if all the dreams of *swarāj* were realised—of an All-India Parliament and an Indian Prime Minister presiding over his Cabinet at Delhi—India would still be under the bondage and tutelage of the West: but if India, casting off the dead and slavish imitation of Western thought, resuscitated the slowly dying-out force and vitality of her own by reawakening her *creative* faculties to their pristine vigour and activity, then, even though the present bureaucratic form of government remained practically unchanged, she would be incomparably more powerful, even politically, than she is now.

Reverting to our subject, Mr. Mody's fourth element of nationality—namely, "community of historical antecedents," still further discloses the secret of making paper-constitutions. Here, at any rate, one would suppose our enthusiastic theorists would have been more guarded in speaking of their grand historical associations and glorious traditions, for this element of nationality is not dependent, as the others are, on plausible suppositions and fanciful forecasts, but is open to the cold, passionless investigation of any impartial historian who could judge for himself the kind of epithets that our historical associations and traditions rightly merit. Had these theorists been even slightly versed in machiavelianism, they would have skillfully passed over this dangerous "element," but their copy-book says that historical associations are essential, and so to make at all hazard their case theoretically complete, an attempt had to be made to prove that "the people of India have historical associations." And what, pray, are these associations? "The veneration in which Akbar's name is held throughout India, and the cult of Sivaji, the great Mahratta warrior, in far-off Bengal, are remarkable illustrations of the unity of historical traditions among the people of the country,"<sup>1</sup> and the sonorous—"The people of India remember at least the ancient glory and prosperity of their fatherland"—can always be relied upon to fill up the rather inconvenient wide gap from the remotest antiquity to Akbar's time. No one can deny that Akbar's memory is held in veneration in Northern India, and certainly in the whole history of India a more luminous figure than his could never be found, nor any name more worthy of being remembered by a grateful posterity than of him in whose prolific imagination was conceived that grand idea of pacifying "all the warring world of Hindustan" into one harmonious nationality based on mutual respect and

<sup>1</sup> *The Political Future of India*, p. 55.

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mutual toleration of all the manifold, interminable differences of race, religion and tradition. But, on the other hand, in our unbounded veneration let us not quit hold of historical facts—let us not forget that Akbar's rule extended over only a limited portion of the India of to-day, and even that portion he never succeeded in consolidating into one compact whole. The representatives of dispossessed dynasties in Bengal, Behar and Orissa, Guzerat and Khandesh were more or less always in a state of revolt against him, and certain Rajput princes, proud of their ancient descent, did not cease to regard him, in spite of all his attempts to conciliate them, as an invader, an outcast and a foreigner. It would be therefore pure exaggeration to say his name is venerated all over India, except in the sense in which all men of heroic bearing are venerated all over the world. Then coming to the cult of Sivaji, I can quite understand why the Mahrattas look upon him as an inspired deliverer and invest his name with a halo of heroism and sanctity, and can even conceive that a broad-minded historian, looking up the chain of mountain fortresses in the wilds of the Koncan, lost in wonder as to how they could possibly have been reared up on those inaccessible heights, and remembering the Mahratta hero's marvellous achievements and forgetting for the moment his other doings, might willingly concede his claim to being called an extraordinary man. But I refuse to believe that by people outside of Maharashtra, Sivaji could ever be looked upon as anything else than what to them he actually was—a plunderer and a scourge, and to none less so than to the Bengalees, to whom his descendants who inherited his great name did not fail to pay recurring costly attentions. The cult of Sivaji, consequently, is as absurd and meaningless in Bengal as the cult of Napoleon would be in Russia and Prussia. Yet the cult in the latter case, if it took place, would not be quite so unintelligible, for whatever misery and humiliation Napoleon may have brought on those States, he at any rate indirectly roused their dormant feeling of nationality to which in the end he owed his own downfall and they all the strength and glory they acquired then and in after times. But, I ask, what did Sivaji do even indirectly for Bengal, except that by crippling the power and resources of all the old rulers of India he laid bare her neck for "the hated foreign yoke"? The cult of Sivaji, therefore, which is perfectly justifiable among the sturdy Mahrattas as calculated to rouse all the manly feelings among their rising generations, and therefore deserving of every encouragement, when so restricted, from all right-minded

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men, even from the present rulers—for surely, it could reflect no credit on the victors of Argaon and Assaye to rest satisfied with merely keeping in order an enfeebled and an emasculated race of ancient warriors—is entirely out of place among the Bengalees, and deserves to be sternly repressed, as it is there engineered solely for the purpose of insidiously inciting the hatred and ill-will of Bengalee youths against their English rulers. Consequently the cult of Sivaji, far from being “a remarkable illustration of the unity of historical traditions among the people of this country,” as Mr. Mody so thoughtlessly characterises it, is, on the contrary, a very characteristic example of the fictitious means by which certain men of eminence strive to demonstrate the so-called unity of the Indian peoples. But let us remember that artificial unity brought about by such contemptible methods can only end in postponing still further real unity and for the present serve only to draw on us the jibes and jeers of all inquiring minds.

Again, whatever historical associations Akbar and Sivaji have gathered round their names, the time during which they ruled hardly covers a period of a hundred years. But what about the historical associations of the hundreds of years that followed them and thousands of years that preceded them? Why are our political historiographers silent here? Why do they pass on with a vague statement of “the ancient glory and prosperity of their fatherland”? Why do they not delve down this mine of ancient glory and prosperity and bring up its fabled riches for our cold scrutiny, and searching inquiry? Whatever their reason may be for their reluctance here, it is not difficult to see why they scrupulously keep clear of all glorious historical associations after the time of Akbar. The simple reason is that the history of this period is no glorious record of memorable deeds but only a long and dismal chapter of infamous acts such as seldom if ever stained the annals of any country in any age. Perpetual warfare, dynastic contests, interminable conspiracies, horrid and cruel practices,<sup>1</sup> unimaginable atrocities of hereditary murderers,<sup>2</sup> highly-organised bands of professional robbers and plunderers,<sup>3</sup> carrying on their devastating operations in province after province in open defiance or with the secret connivance of the constituted authorities—in short, state of general disorder and complete misrule, relieved here and there by the strong personality of a Rana Singh or Hyder Ali and by the luminous figure of an Ahalya Bai c

<sup>1</sup> Sacer, female infanticide, human sacrifice, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Thugs.

<sup>3</sup> Decaite.



a Tara Bai,—were the salient features of the history of India after the time of Akbar. "When we began to take possession of India," remarks Sir John Seeley, "it was already in a state of wild anarchy such as Europe has perhaps never known. What government it had was pretty invariably despotic, and was generally in the hands of military adventurers, depending on a soldiery composed of bandits whose whole vocation was plunder. . . . And over the greater part of India there prevailed a system which it would be appropriate to call, not government of low type, but *robbery* of a high type."<sup>1</sup> Likewise Sir John Strachey says, "The first great and obvious fact, overshadowing all other facts in significance, is this, that in place of a condition of Society given up, as it was immediately before our time, to anarchy and to the liability to every conceivable form of violence and oppression, we have absolute peace."<sup>2</sup> It will be said that Seeley and Strachey exaggerate the evils that prevailed in India in order to magnify the achievements of their countrymen. Such a charge would be unfair, at any rate in the case of the former, as he consistently maintains that the so-called English conquest of India was a mere internal revolution and no conquest, and affirms with Mill that it was due to no natural superiority on the part of the English; still, it would be best to bring the evidence of one whose love of India and its people and whose noble defence of the ancient Hindu civilisation against the diatribes of James Mill are still gratefully remembered by most historians. Speaking on the general results of the British rule in India, Horace Hayman Wilson says, ". . . the greater number of the weaker princes have been rescued from the most grievous and intolerable oppression, the people have been protected from plunder and devastation, and the general condition of India has been changed from a scene of perpetual warfare to a state of universal tranquillity."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Mr. Mody's fourth element of nationality fails, and fails miserably, in the case of India. We have already seen that his three other tests have met with a like fate, and so, if we are to attach any weight to the political doctrine deduced from the past history and the present social conditions of the various nations of Europe and America, we must perforce admit that there is not the remotest possibility of a well-organised, compact nation evolving out of the vast congeries

<sup>1</sup> *The Expansion of England*, pp. 195 and 303.

<sup>2</sup> *India, its Administration and Progress*, p. 502.

<sup>3</sup> James Mill's *History of India*, vol. vi. p. 478.

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of peoples inhabiting India at any conceivable distance of time, that Indian Nationality is in all truth a chimera, and a united India a fond visionary's dream totally outside the range of practical politics. The splendid political unity she possesses at present is mainly and solely due to her present "foreign" rulers, with whose disappearance every trace of unity needs must simultaneously disappear, but with whose continued presence each year that passes needs must bring us into a closer bond of peace and harmony based on mutual respect and good-will for each other's advancement and mutual forbearance of each other's faults and natural shortcomings.

Now let us examine the three requisites on the possession of which, according to Mr. Mody, a people might without question establish their fitness to govern themselves. They are—unity, intellectual capacity and character. We have already seen that there is neither unity nor is there any possibility of it among the heterogeneous masses of India. Coming to the question of intellectual capacity, it is not easy to make any positive statement. If we are to judge the intellectual capacity of Indians by the notable contributions their ancestors made to the general culture of the world in the remote past—contributions that for their spiritual insight and well nigh superhuman wisdom have always drawn and continue to draw the applause and admiration of some of the greatest minds of the world,—there can scarcely be two opinions on the subject. But such a mode of judging would be as false as that of gauging the mental capacity of modern Athenians or modern Romans from that of their illustrious predecessors. Again, to repeat and emphasise what I have already said, it would be equally false to measure the intellectual powers of a nation from the extent to which education has spread among its various classes. Education by itself may seemingly furnish such a test, *never* really. An instance to the point is Italy. Its people are now incalculably better and more scientifically educated in every branch of human knowledge than their predecessors ever were in the Middle Ages. yet, what a wide chasm lies between the intellectual powers of the two periods. The mental sweep of one great man of those days like Dante or Michael Angelo, Giotto or Leonardo da Vinci would probably encompass the total mental capacity of the whole Italian nation of the present day with all its vaunted accumulation of scientific knowledge. It may be asked, then, what is the real test? The real test of intellectual progress lies in the development of its thinking power as manifested in its works

of art and literature. Can we claim any development in this direction? Is there not, on the contrary, evidence enough to prove that the case is exactly the reverse? Take, for instance, History. Has India produced a single historian in the last two hundred years? Must we go to Orme and Mill, Grant-Duff and Elphinstone, Maine and Kaye, Tod and Taylor, not to speak of a countless host of lesser historians, to ascertain the simplest facts of our history? Must all the knowledge of our priceless heritage of architecture be derived from a "foreigner" Fergusson, the high artistic merit of our industrial arts from a Birdwood, and the underlying spirituality of our old paintings from a Havell? Must a Dr. Vogel remind us that Indian archæology is purely a European science, started and carried on almost entirely by European scholars? And must a Hume be the father of the greatest political organisation of our own country? Our debt to Europe is not confined to matters of history and politics, art and archæology, but can be traced in almost every imaginable direction, whether it be law or literature, religion or natural science. While such is our poverty in the highest exercise of mental faculties, to speak boastfully of the remarkable intellectual capacity of Indians tends only to lower us in the estimation of all thinking men. No flourishing in our face of the names of Salar Jung and Madhav Rao, Telang and Tagore, Mehta and Gokhale, Bhandarkar and Chanda-varkar, Mookerjee and Naorojee, Bannerjee and Bonnerjee, Roy and Sen, Bose and Ghose can frighten us and blind us to obvious facts. One swallow does not make a summer. So picking out a couple of names eminent in science and economics, politics and law, religion and literature in a "nation" of three hundred million people, and that, too, in the space of a century or two, serves but to make the fact of our intellectual poverty all too apparent. They are the exceptions that prove the general mediocrity of the present-day Indian intellect. Even these eminent men, with the honourable exceptions of Dr. Bhandarkar, Rabinranath Tagore and Prof. Bose, have added no fresh ideas, made no real contribution to the world's stock of knowledge; nor have they advanced any new theory of life, nor founded any new school of thought, nor developed any new system of political organisation. Their ideas and theories, schools and systems have been borrowed, and borrowed wholesale, from Europe, and their chief merit lies in their courageous attempt to adapt these to the uses of their country, in open defiance of its ancient ideals and peculiar

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circumstances. "Only when Indians can make Europe feel," remarks Mr. Havell in a memorable passage, "that they have as much to teach Europe as they have to learn from her will they fully justify their claim to such political rights as Europeans enjoy. As long as their chief ambition is to become successful imitators of what Europe does they will remain in a state of political inferiority—and rightly so, for indiscriminate imitation is an admission of inferiority which inevitably depreciates the power of initiative and prevents the development of all the creative faculties."

Let me in passing give an instance or two to show what high value we ourselves set on our own mental powers. The Gackwar, a rank swadeshist,—a 'man who has an unbounded faith in the intellectual capacity and a whole-hearted sympathy with the political aspirations of his countrymen—could not find an Indian with the requisite mental and moral capacity to be his Dewan and chief adviser, and so had to ask the Government of India to lend the services of an Englishman, who served His Highness in that capacity, not for a year or two, but for a period of six years, and who, had he not been made to revert to his original service by the Supreme Government, would in all probability have remained the trusted adviser of the Maharaja to this day. To give another instance, the proprietors of a newspaper, lately started in Bombay under the patronage and immediate supervision of some of the leading Congressmen, such as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Mr. Gokhale, Mr. Setalvad, and Mr. D. E. Vatcha, to ventilate the many grievances and further the political aspirations of the educated Indians, could not find in the whole of India a competent Indian editor nor an energetic Indian manager, and so had to engage the services of an Irishman and an Englishman. Personally, I can conceive of nothing more humiliating to the self-respect and dignity of every educated Indian than being branded by his own countrymen as incapable of voicing his country's just grievances and peculiar disabilities with sanity of judgment and vigour of language sufficient to command the respectful hearing of even his opponents, and so thus needs must go begging to "foreigners" to champion their cause, in which the latter, with the best of will, can take, after all, but an academic interest. When we are thus baffled in our search for Indians competent enough to take up responsible posts, and when we ourselves are forced to acknowledge our own intellectual inferiority, is it fair, I ask, to flaunt in the face of our opponent quotations from the speeches and writings of

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Heber and Frere, Elphinstone and Lawrence, Munro and Malcolm, Cobden and Bright, to uphold the palpably false statement of the last-named that "there are *thousands* of persons in India who are competent to take up ANY position to which the Government may choose to advance them"?

Let us, then, finally turn to Mr. Mody's third essential condition of self government—Character. I will pass over the charges of untruthfulness, servility and corruption that are frequently levelled against the Indians, as Mr. Mody himself to a certain extent admits them. But for the effective carrying on of a polyglot administration like that of India, truthfulness, incorruptibility and mere vapid independence are not the only nor all important qualities. I fancy there are a few others besides these which are equally indispensable, such as a calm and almost overweening self-confidence, a general alertness of mind and body in which may be included qualities of sustained energy, organising capacity and driving power, but above all, an absolutely unrelaxing tenacity of purpose and an *inherent* capacity to manage men and command their respect. I maintain these are qualities indispensable to all true rulers and leaders of men, and I further maintain that these are the very qualities which the Englishman possesses in an eminent degree and the Indian most woefully lacks; and this was why Bluntschli remarked that "the justification of the English rule in India rests on the *need* of the population for a higher guidance." I will not stop here to trace the cause of the evil. Want of alertness may be due to our climate, want of self-confidence to the prevalence of joint-family system, and it may be that centuries of successive despotisms left little or no room for the development of other qualities. Be this as it may, the fact remains that the Indian character is singularly deficient in these essential qualities of a born ruler. Bengal is generally conceded to be the home, and the Bengalees the leaders of the Indian Nationalist Movement, yet one of their truest friends had to admit that in Bengal "*there are no good political leaders*. There are excellent speakers and eloquent writers, but NONE of the prominent men seem to have that heaven-given capacity to lead."<sup>1</sup> Without this heaven-given capacity, or the "divine side" as Napoleon once so aptly called it, there can be a kind of rule—'tis true; but a strong, efficient government capable of commanding both the respect and willing obedience of the governed—NEVER. In the "capacity to lead" the English people stand head and shoulders above every other people in

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay MacDonald's *Awakening of India*.

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the world, and this capacity cannot be acquired by any system of physical culture or mental training or moral teaching or political education, nor, for the matter of that, by any human effort whatever, but must come to us, if it comes at all, as a free gift from Heaven. "For if I rightly understand," said Ischomachus to Socrates, "this blessed gift, the power of commanding the respect and willing obedience of men, by no means is it, in its entirety, a merely human quality, but it is in part divine. It is a gift plainly given to those truly initiated in the mystery of self-command . . . that on this score one set of people differ largely from another both in point of wit and judgment."<sup>1</sup> The present Begum of Bhopal was born and brought up under the strictest *purdah* such as would have assuredly undermined the daring and manhood of the boldest leader of men, yet while on her pilgrimage to Mecca, she galloped at the head of her cavalry and so effectively charged a band of armed robbers that they never dared to molest her party any more. The plea, therefore, that "subjection to a foreign power narrows the scope of initiative and action" can give us no shelter, nor can the much quoted Gladstonian maxim—"It is liberty alone which fits men for liberty"—be of much help to us.

So we have seen that more or less all the requisites for an efficient self government are wanting in India. There is no unity amongst her people nor is there any possibility of its coming into existence at any measurable distance of time; she totally lacks the highest form of pure intellectual development, namely, on its creative side; and the Indian character is without those traits which are essential for the maintenance of law and order and to carry on an effective administration among such a confused mass of humanity as India possesses and must ever continue to possess.

Consequently, self government for India, as a whole, based even on the limited type of one of the Continental States, is wholly beyond the pale of practical politics. To set up, then, "a system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire" as the goal of Indian political aspirations is, to put it bluntly, not the legitimate ambition of thinking politicians but the pitiable hallucination of raving enthusiasts grossly ignorant of the fundamental difference that will ever separate the British Colonies from British India. The Colonies and India are in nothing alike but in everything radically different. In the

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon's *Economist*, chap. xxi.

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Colonies everything is brand-new. There we have the most progressive race put in the circumstances most favourable to progress. There we have no past and an undoubted future. The political institutions are all ultra-English, government is a pure democracy, and, being untrammelled by traditions, customs, religious susceptibilities and prejudices, has developed to the utmost possible extent compatible with the maintenance of law and order in the State. All is liberty, industry, invention and innovation. India, on the other hand, is all past and, one might almost say, has no distinct future. Everything which Europe, and still more the New World and the Colonies, has outlived and cast away, still flourishes in full vigour in India—grossest superstitions, paralysing fatalism, legalised polygamy, the most primitive priestcraft upholding in some cases the most absurd social usages, and at times getting its living out of the most pitiable religious susceptibilities of the unreasoning millions. Besides, it is only the deep sentiment based on existing family ties, a common ancestry, cherished race traditions and national pride which links the Colonies to the mother country, and inspires them to contribute to the common Naval defence as they are now doing. These ties and traditions, that deep sentiment and still deeper national pride are wholly wanting in the case of India. Well might Lord Crewe question: "Is it conceivable that any time an Indian Empire could exist on the lines of Australia and New Zealand, with no British officials and troops, no tie of creed or of blood replacing those material bonds?" To a crazy-brained political enthusiast nothing is inconceivable, but to the sober-minded Indian it is quite evident that whatever political maxims are most applicable to the Colonies are *ipso facto* totally inapplicable to India. Consequently to prescribe some political nostrum that would be equally efficacious for either serves but to reveal the peculiar weakness of the Indian mind—its want of the historic sense. "His mind is steeped in ideas," says Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. "What is time, what is event to him? Nothing but a movement in the eternal, nothing but a ripple on the disturbed surface of spiritual reality. This strange quality carries with it appropriate weaknesses. Hard, cold fact does not make sufficient impression on such a mind. It plays with fact, and turns it round, explains it in this way and in that, and finally, perhaps, explains it away altogether. The historical faculty discovers the eternal in the fact, and does not dissolve the fact into the nothingness of the eternal. But the historical faculty is also the faculty of political criticism,

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have such voice and influence in the councils of the State that the wishes of the people as expressed by their representatives may be effectively carried out in acts and measures of government: in short, they desire to have a real representative government. Even if we admitted that such a form of government is practicable in the immediate future, the question is, would it be desirable? The answer to this question will rest very much on how we answer two other general questions. Is representative government the best possible system of government for the modern world? If it is so, has its later developments fulfilled the hopes with which it started? I am fully aware that most of my readers will answer the first question without any hesitation whatever in the affirmative, for the simple reason that in one form or another the most advanced nations of the world have adopted that system of government, but more so as the most conservative and well-nigh moribund states like Turkey and Persia, and even that one fossilised country in the world—China—have all come to recognise its many and undoubted advantages over every other system, and have thought lightly of shedding blood in the sacred cause of installing that blessed system of government in their own territories.

There is nothing in the past history of the world that makes one despair of its ultimate future as the amazing gullibility of its so-called rational creatures. It is indeed strange with what perfect simplicity whole communities of these creatures would let themselves be swayed and mastered by certain prepossessions and delusions. There may be no real basis in a notion that is floating in the air, yet a man, finding everybody adopting it, lets it enter his own head, and it would be indeed wonderful if it did not eventually become an axiom of Euclid with him and if he did not take, in the universal repetition and reverberation, all contradiction of it as an insult and a sign of insanity hardly to be borne with patience. In the gloom and frenzy of a revolution a man shouts: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity; and the next day thousands of men take up that cry as if the key to the long-looked-for millennium had at last been found. It might have been supposed that even one of them would look at the sea or clouds or stars to see if all or any of them have the thing he calls "Liberty";<sup>1</sup> or if he lived in a busy indus-

<sup>1</sup> "How false is the conception, how frantic the pursuit, of that treacherous phantom which men call Liberty: most treacherous, indeed, of all phantoms; for the feeblest ray of reason might surely show us, that not only its attainment, but its being was impossible. There is no such thing in the universe."—Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, ch. vii.



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and the Westerner, taking up the vernacular press, will properly complain of a want of candour and of rigid sticking to fact, of too much imagination, of simile and metaphor which are used so much as to become misleading; of, in consequence, a wordy exaggeration. One finds this in the very best of the Indian papers. I have several times had to pause and marvel at the extraordinary faculty shown by writers in these papers for leading their readers by wordy aeroplane journeys to conclusions very much in the heavens." I do not at all wonder that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald should have often paused and wondered at the extraordinary aeronautics of Indian politicians, when I myself have always stood agape watching the wonderful flights of our Congress airmen during their grand aviation meeting at the end of the year. On the same subject an equally candid friend and well-wisher of India—Lord Sydenham—recently remarked—

"In India constitution-making is not studied, and I have been sometimes surprised to see Colonial self government advocated as a simple and natural development capable of early realization. I wonder if those who hold these views have any idea of what Colonial self government means. The dominions of the British Empire as they are now called are the most advanced democracies in the world. . . . The only officials from England whom Australia receives are the Governors General and the six State Governors. The control of the whole machinery of Government and the army and navy rests wholly with the Ministry of the day, and changes of Cabinets are, of course, frequent. Canada and New Zealand receive respectively a Governor General and a Governor, but no more. Now, what in all seriousness I would ask you and all thoughtful Indians is—can this be really what you wish? . . . Colonial self government, I frankly confess, I cannot yet see even in visions, because it involves the absolute destruction of all that is most deeply ingrained in the life of the people, and because it would render India defenceless against grave dangers, external as well as internal."

The most astute and the least visionary of those in the Congress Camp, like Mr. Mody, perceiving that it would not do at present to interpret too literally the cardinal clause of the Congress Constitution, have sought to evade the difficulty by saying that "self-government not being within measurable distance of attainment, what the Indians want is the living representation of the people in the government of their country." In other words, what they want is that elected members should

have such voice and influence in the councils of the State that the wishes of the people as expressed by their representatives may be effectively carried out in acts and measures of government: in short, they desire to have a real representative government. Even if we admitted that such a form of government is practicable in the immediate future, the question is, would it be desirable? The answer to this question will rest very much on how we answer two other general questions. Is representative government the best possible system of government for the modern world? If it is so, has its later developments fulfilled the hopes with which it started? I am fully aware that most of my readers will answer the first question without any hesitation whatever in the affirmative, for the simple reason that in one form or another the most advanced nations of the world have adopted that system of government, but more so as the most conservative and well-nigh moribund states like Turkey and Persia, and even that one fossilised country in the world—China—have all come to recognise its many and undoubted advantages over every other system, and have thought lightly of shedding blood in the sacred cause of installing that blessed system of government in their own territories.

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trial town and had no opportunity to look on such things, it might have been supposed that he would step out of his home to watch and question the first dozen men that crossed his path to find if there was any Equality whatever between any two of them in physique or intellect, in moral qualities or spiritual insight. If, however, he could not be bothered to step out of his home to find out these things, it might have been supposed that he would attempt to form only for a day a Fraternity in his own home-world of brothers and sisters, parents and servants, before shouting the magic formula in the open street. But such suppositions are vain, for who can change, as the sage Antoninus sighed of old, the opinion\* of *these people*? No, not the wisest of mortals. "These people" cannot be convinced out of their "axiom of Euclid" by any reasoning whatever. "Singular," exclaims Carlyle, "in the case of human swarms, with what perfection of unanimity and quasi-religious conviction the stupidest absurdities can be received as axioms of Euclid, nay, as articles of faith which you are not only to believe, unless malignantly insane, but are (if you have any honour or morality) to push into practice, and without delay see done, if your soul would live!" And yet these human swarms, believing with quasi-religious conviction in stupidest absurdities, form the foundation on which the whole superstructure of the representative system of government has always to be raised. Should, therefore, the foundation be proved weak and unsubstantial, both theoretically and practically, it would follow *ipso facto* that what is raised on it would be equally weak and unsubstantial. The first and foremost principle which this system of government proclaims is that Count of Heads must be the Divine Court of Appeal on every question and interest of mankind. In other words, it proclaims the most palpable and the most delirious absurdity that could be imagined, "the equality of men"—any voter equal to any other, the sage and seer equal to the chimney-sweep and the shoe-black. At the polls Thomas Carlyle, Richard Cobden, and Henry Newman have no more direct voice or power in the government of their country than any other Tom, Dick, and Harry. The recent agitation in Ulster is an instance to the point. The most intellectual and the most advanced part of Ireland will have to be, when the Home Rule Bill finally passes, under the heels of the least cultured and the most backward parts of that country, simply because Count of Heads being the God appointed way in the universe, the latter can always maintain an unchallenged

superiority over the former in the muster of its animated skulls.

It is said that the ideal of representative government is to attain a mode of governance "broad-based upon the people's will." This reads perfect: but can it bear a closer examination? What is people's will? Even admitting that it could be ascertained by driving the herd to the polling-booth, would the collective-vote of the human cattle be of any value if most of them are hopelessly foolish, without any power of judgment? Are the foolish, because they count by millions, to rule the wise, who cannot be counted even by hundreds. On the contrary, is it not the everlasting *privilege* of the foolish to be governed by the wise irrespective of their number? Can this eternal method of governance be changed by any human contrivance? It seems the representative system of government assumes that it could be, since it figures Society as a *machine* and calculates its mental power by opposing mind to mind just as it would its muscular, by opposing body to body. On this calculation two, or, at most, ten, little minds must contain greater mental power than any one mind, no matter how powerful the latter may be. "Notable absurdity!" exclaims Carlyle. "For the plain truth, very plain, we think is, that minds are opposed to minds in quite a different way; and *one* man that has a higher wisdom, a hitherto unknown spiritual Truth in him, is stronger, *not* than ten men that have it not, or than ten thousand, but than *all* men that have it not. . . . Find in any country the Ablest man that exists there; raise *him* to the supreme place, and loyally reverence him: you have a perfect government for that country; no ballot-box, parliamentary eloquence, voting, constitution-building, or other machinery whatsoever can improve it a whit."

To us, however, in this glorious age of "enlightened popular suffrage," such considerations rarely occur! But leaving them aside for the moment, let us see if the representative system of government in modern England really and effectually represents the will of the people at large as it is supposed to do on paper; or if, on the contrary, it reduces the apparent free choice of rulers to a ridiculous choice between undesirable alternatives and hands the whole public life over to specialised manipulators and skilful wire-pullers. It was recently said by a well-known authority that the present House of Commons could scarcely have *misrepresented* the people of great Britain and Ireland more if it had been appointed haphazard by the Lord Chamberlain or selected by lot from among the inhabitants of Notting

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Hill. Election of representatives in one-member local constituencies by a single vote gives a citizen practically no choice beyond the candidates appointed by the two great party organisations in the State. It is, in fact, an electoral system that forbids absolutely any vote splitting or any indication of shades of opinion. The presence of more than two candidates introduces an altogether unmanageable complication, and the voter is at once reduced to voting not to secure the return of the perhaps *less hopeful* candidate he likes but to ensure the rejection of the candidate he most dislikes. The grand result of the whole contest consequently is that the nimble wire-puller quietly slips in. Mr. H. G. Wells puts the whole matter in a nut-shell when he says, "In Great Britain we do not have Elections any more; we have Rejections. What really happens at a general election is that the party organisations—obscure and secretive conclaves with entirely mysterious funds—appoint about twelve hundred men to be our rulers, and all that we, we so-called *self governing* people, are permitted to do is, in a muddled, angry way, to strike off the names of about half of these selected gentlemen."

If, according to Mr. Wells, this glorious system of government is reduced to such a solemn farce in the land of its birth where it has been in existence for at least more than a thousand years, and where, at any rate, it might fairly be supposed to have received its fullest trial and reached its highest development, what better results can we expect from it in a country where it has been initiated only within the last generation or two? "One of the main purposes of the Indian National Congress," says Sir Valentine Chirol, "has avowedly been to set up a claim for the introduction of representative government in India. Yet it has itself seldom escaped the control of a handful of masterful leaders who have ruled it in the most irresponsible and despotic fashion. The Congress has, in fact, displayed exactly the same feature which has been so markedly manifested in the case of municipalities—namely, the tendency of "representative" institutions in India to resolve themselves into machines operated by, and for the benefit of, an extremely limited and domineering oligarchy." When we thus see that the actual results of the representative system have fallen so very much short of the high expectations that were formed of it, we need not be surprised to hear one of the acutest men in England say: "It is pathetic, I think, to hear that so many of the most earnest men in modern Europe regard the representative system as almost played out

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—perhaps I am putting that too strongly, but not, I think, much too strongly—and as fit now apparently only for Turkey or China, while in more advanced countries some better system must be found by which the community may carry on its work. I call it pathetic because we all know with what high hopes each successive development of the representative system has been met, how on each occasion of a fresh development it has been thought in enthusiastic communities that the millennium was at hand, while in more sober communities like ours it has been thought that some vast and immediate improvement would take place in the lot of mankind. It is pathetic how those hopes, in so far as they were excessive, have been disappointed, and how we have gradually had to learn that you cannot get out of human beings, however you may distribute or redistribute them, more than they have got in them."

These words of Mr. Balfour bring home to us, as I have said before, a great truth—"You cannot get out of men more than they have got in them"—which must be as often repeated and as insistently maintained by the Realists as it is lightly passed over and persistently denied by the Idealists. It is the unsurmountable obstacle in the way of every possible form of democracy over which it has always stumbled in the past and must stumble over and over again in the future, possess though we may the most perfect mode of election that human ingenuity can contrive or the most perfect scheme of education that science can suggest. But the fact ever remains that you cannot get out of a man more than what he has got in him; in short, nothing can be evolved unless it is first involved. It has been remarked by wise men of every age and clime that the mass of mankind are *irreclaimably* foolish and consequently possess no political capacity and have not the remotest idea wherein consists their own welfare except in their eternal creed of "less work and more wages." Their own apostle had to confess in the middle of the last century that "their idea of social reform appears to be simply higher wages, and less work, for the sake of more sensual indulgence." What John Stuart Mill found fifty years ago was noted in the recent strikes, and the same will be noticed fifty, or for the matter of that, five hundred years hence.

It is obvious, therefore, that the masses are totally unfit to lay down, to guide or even to influence the policy of the State either in domestic or foreign affairs, and if we wish to have in State affairs guidance and wisdom, in the real sense of the

candidly stated and re-stated, must remain an autocracy. It ought to be benevolent and full of sympathy with Indian ideas and composed of the ablest men that England could spare, but must still be an autocracy and nothing but an autocracy. There is nothing new or surprising in this conclusion of Lord Morley, for the genius of Indian polity, as Mr. Srinivasa Rao has so amply demonstrated, is and ever has been essentially monarchical and autocratic.

Now, let us see if this—the only possible form of real, effective British rule in India—is compatible with the professed creeds of the two political parties in India. The Extremist Party has openly declared for a free and independent India, and so it can have nothing to do with British rule in any shape or form whatever. We have no quarrel with this party, for it is an open and avowed enemy of British rule. But with the National Congress Party we have every reason to quarrel, for while they vociferously proclaim a desire to see British rule maintained in India, they have set up a goal for Indian aspirations which cannot but change that rule into a mere right of general supervision or at most into a kind of acknowledged suzerainty, both of which, under the peculiar conditions of India, are unthinkable. It is self-evident that autocracy and democracy are opposed to one another and cannot possibly exist side by side. The Congress Party aims at a Colonial type of democratic government which is diametrically opposed to any type of autocratic government, and as autocracy is the only form of government compatible with the effective maintenance of British rule in India, the obvious conclusion is that the Congress Party wishes to set up in India a form of government totally incompatible with the *effective* maintenance of British rule in it. Consequently, those who wish to be quite independent of the present Government and at the same time anxiously desire not only to have British rule maintained permanently but to remain a reality in India, have no party to turn to. For instance, a man in my position who disdains to be at the beck and call of Government, cares not two straws for official frown or favour and is anxious to retain perfect freedom to comment, criticise and haul up before the bar of public opinion any Government servant, high or low, for every improper or ill-mannered use of his power and position, and who at the same time is equally desirous of condemning the fantastic dreams and fatuous schemes of "self-government within the Empire" and of giving a loyal and unflinching support to the present Government by holding up to laughter and contempt those

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who hamper its beneficent acts and misrepresent its benevolent intentions,—such a man at the present moment in India is without a party. I know there is a large number of Englishmen engaged in trade and industries, and not a few officials, who, while desiring to have fair play and see justice done to Indians, consider Colonial ideals as suicidal to the best interests of India; and likewise there is a growing number of thoughtful Indians who, while resolved not to put up any more with the irresponsible rule and high handed ways of haughty bureaucrats, have reconciled themselves to the necessity of having “British rule whilst time lasts” and determined once for all to give up the wild goose chase of *swarāj*. These men at present have perforce to sit with folded hands, and there being no organised party to harness their energies, these naturally run to waste either in stray magazine articles or, worse still, in fruitless discussion and idle talk. Is it, therefore, too much to hope that a man of light and leading will be found to organise and launch into being this party, which might not inappropriately go under the designation of—*The Independent Pro-British Party*? When it comes to be formed its leaders should take care that they do not make that fatal mistake, so natural in these democratic days, of having a large and unwieldy body of half-hearted followers, but should rather aim at having a small, select following of thoroughly reliable men. The doors, however, should be thrown open to all, without any distinction of caste, creed or colour; but for the present, to give it a tone of real independence and retain for it an unfettered freedom of action, Government officials should be rigidly excluded from the lead and guidance of the Party. Its creed may be briefly stated under the following four headings—

1. The permanent maintenance of effective British rule in India.
2. The removal of all invidious distinctions which humiliate Indians in their own eyes and in those of others.
3. The employment of as many Indians as possible in the higher grades of the Public Service compatible with the active maintenance of its tone and traditions.
4. The devolution on local Governments of as many functions as can be safely entrusted to them without involving any risk to the Central Government of losing its unity of purpose and policy.

It will be seen at a glance that 1, 3, and 4 are identical with the cardinal points of policy laid down by Lord Cromer last year in the House of Lords. As we shall see later on, No. 4 has



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no irreconcilable difference with the policy put forward by Mr. Gokhale at the Reception given to him in London last year as "the immediate aim of the National Progressive Party." No. 3 meets the principal grievance of the educated Indians, and No. 2 is the standing grievance of every Indian of every class and creed, and which no Englishman having a spark of feeling in him has hesitated to endorse.

These, therefore, would be the four leading and unalterable articles in the creed of the Independent Pro-British Party. All other questions, such as elementary education, caste system, industrial development, artistic regeneration, etc., it will approach with a perfectly open mind. I shall now expand and develop a little the creed of the Party.

The first is the fundamental doctrine of the Party, compared with which the three others are, after all, of secondary importance. It at once and unmistakably distinguishes the Party from other parties. "I can conceive of nobody so debased," said Mr. Gokhale some years ago, "as to see any special merit in being ruled by an alien government." No words could have been truer, none more calculated to rouse the self respect and sense of honour of the subject people provided the government was alien, and the alien government could be sooner or later replaced by an indigenous administration. If, on the contrary, his words are of the nature of "a half-truth which is ever a worse lie," no words could have been more false, none more calculated to do harm to the cause which the great leader himself has at heart—namely, the future welfare of India. It is, indeed, open to serious question whether, of all the mischievous ideas that have been allowed to spread freely for the last many years, there ever has been any which have wrought as great mischief among the youth of India as the one which was and is still persistently, in one shape or another, brought before their mind—namely, that the British Government of India is an experiment, a mere provisional arrangement which is bound to terminate sooner or later, and the sooner the better. "Has not the ideal of self-government, however elevated," most justly questioned the Hon. Mr. Ali Inam at one of the annual gatherings of the All-India Moslem League, "caused impatience on account of its impracticability. And has not the impatience carried the idealist off his feet? And has not this loss of equipoise created Extremism? And has not Extremism given birth to anarchism, bombs, secret societies and assassination, and is not all this the greatest menace to the country? The responsibility lies

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**DOMINANT RACE** to exercise supreme authority is admitted, that instant the whole ingeniously-got-up case of the Congress Party collapses; for the possibility of any one race arising out of the existing races to supplant the English with such unchallenged superiority as to make the rest accept its ascendancy with willing submissiveness, is inconceivable by any stretch of the imagination.

I have not yet spoken of the complicated question of external danger. It is the tendency nowadays to speak lightly of foreign invasions. Russian aggressiveness is now generally considered a thing of the past. In reality it is held in abeyance by her late defeat and is only awaiting occasion to manifest itself, as is proved by the way Russia is conducting herself in Northern Persia. With Col. Yate, I believe at the present moment she is slowly and steadily gathering her military strength in the regions round the Pamirs; but she is carrying on her operations so noiselessly that she has succeeded, and succeeded splendidly, in hoodwinking us and laying low the so-called bogey of Russian Invasion. It is only when England's hands are tied up in a great Continental war, that the Bear is likely to bestir himself sufficiently to make his low growls fall on our distant ears, and then it will be time enough to revive "the Russian Scare"; for the present, therefore, let us sleep our sweet, self-induced sleep.

I will not speak of the constant danger arising out of the deep rooted predatory habits of our wild Border Tribes, but Pan-Islamism is a possible danger, and though it is not formidable, and has little cohesiveness at present, it is yet a growing force, as the Balkan War has so amply demonstrated, and no far-sighted statesman would think of disregarding it. But above all the accumulative force of these menaces, there is the constant and formidable danger arising from our long-extending coast line. Sir Alfred Lyall, following the indisputable conclusions of Captain Mahan, thought that whoever was the master of the seas had India at his mercy. Sir Alfred has applied the theory to the past history of the French, and conclusively proved how their successes in India varied according as they retained or lost the command of the intervening seas.

For all these reasons, both to ward off external danger and to maintain internal peace and order among a disordered, disjointed, disruptive, disorganised mass of humanity, the Government of India must necessarily be, for a period of time that cannot be measured or computed, under British

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supremacy—not merely titular supremacy, but such a living supremacy as would make every branch of administration throb with its abounding life and vigour. It is true that in the middle of the last century, some of the most liberal-minded statesmen of England cherished the hope that when the people of India were ripe for self government, England would have fulfilled her mission, as a ruler, in the East. It would be both foolish and insincere to explain away this oft repeated statement. The only way of meeting it is, frankly to admit the fact, and to maintain that in the light of fuller knowledge, the cherishing of such a hope is entirely vain and full of danger, and could only end in the desertion by England of her duty in the East. "Should the British Government abdicate its functions," said Sir James Stephen long ago, "it would soon turn order into chaos. No country in the world is more orderly, more quiet, or more peaceful than British India as it is; but if the vigour of the Government should ever be relaxed, if it should lose its essential unity of purpose, and fall into hands either weak or unfaithful, chaos would come again like a flood."

Now let us turn to the second doctrine of the Pro-British Party. It would be idle to deny that while the Englishman, as a ruler, has succeeded in securing the obedience and respect of the Indian, he has failed, and failed signally, in winning his *affection*. The cause is not far to seek: it is simply due to his overbearing manners and his ill-disguised contempt for the Indian, and particularly the educated Indian. Asked by Lord Ronaldshay, at one of the sittings of the Public Services Commission, as to the relations of Anglo-Indians and Indians, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta said: "I wish I had not to answer that question. I have the highest respect for some of the Englishmen, from whom I have experienced kindness and courtesy. I have admiration for many of them, but taking the average Anglo-Indian, I have always felt that there was a feeling among them of dislike for educated natives." The preceding pages, I trust, sufficiently indicate that I am not overmuch prejudiced against the English, and therefore if I say I endorse every word of Sir Pherozeshah, that expression of my opinion cannot be attributed to any natural bias, but rather to the conviction that has grown out of my long and varied experience in different parts of India. Let me not be misunderstood: here and in England I have been paid the best of attention, and received with unfeigned

cordiality by many Englishmen and Englishwomen; in fact, I am proud to have among them some of my dearest and most esteemed friends; yet I unreservedly repeat and affirm that the average Anglo-Indian has an unmitigated contempt for the Indian as such, and particularly the educated Indian. On this subject Mr. Ramsay Macdonald has devoted pages in his *Awakening of India*, and Sir Henry Cotton has two whole chapters in his *New India*; and these two, with Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. Keir Hardie, have shown, by a series of authenticated instances and their personal experience, the treatment that is meted out to Indians irrespective of their birth, breeding, education and social standing by the haughty bureaucrat and hare-brained military officer.\* Only the other day Dr. R. F. Horton, who has been otherwise rightly extolling the doings of his countrymen in India, mentioned, in one of his letters to the *Daily Chronicle*, certain characteristics of the Indian people "which are peculiarly winning," and then passing on to certain other characteristics of their English rulers, wrote: "The coarse and common natures among ourselves, on the contrary, ride roughshod over this gentleness and courtesy. And there are few things on this planet which are more odious to meet than the Englishman, looking very gross and uncomely beside the native grace and charm of India, with brusque and bullying voice, ordering, complaining, cursing. The worst English are certainly the most unmannerly boors in the world; and in India they are shown up with an effect which makes one blush for the homeland." The Anglo-Indian journals, instead of taking up this serious and apparently interminable grievance of the Indians, try to gloss over the fact by their eternal, "It is to be regretted that the writer does not here discriminate, but charges Anglo-Indians as a class with an attitude and spirit observable in a small minority only"; or, still worse, by insolently calling the commendable efforts of the Labour Members of Parliament to open their eyes to their intolerable offensiveness, "the petty spitefulness and ignorance of the Labour Members; who at intervals take upon themselves the duty of lecturing the Empire on how to behave."

Few know more than I do the racial weakness of the English in this direction and the allowance which in all fairness ought to be made for it. Nobody is more willing to concede that a certain amount of pride and aloofness is necessary in the rulers to command the respect and obedience of the ruled. And nobody deplores more the tendency of the Indian to become over-familiar and construe the natural affability of a

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well-bred Englishman into a too-easy familiarity, as unexpected as uncalled for, which puzzles and annoys the latter and compels him to be on his guard against this weakness of Indians. Add to this the backwardness, unsocial habits and crude ways, sometimes shockingly so, of some of the foremost Indian potentates and leaders of public opinion—and you have the apologia of the Anglo-Indian for his behaviour towards the Indian. To explain away these glaring defects in the social habits of an Indian would be as disingenuous as it would be unfair to say that such habits ought not to be a source of annoyance and vexation to an Englishman. I myself, in spite of my being used to their ways from my very childhood, have felt again and again this annoyance and vexation, and at times my patience and forbearance have been exercised almost to the point of breaking: yet, I submit, these habits at the worst do not merit rudeness or chastisement; on the contrary, I know for a certainty that they have called forth the most lively sympathy and willing guidance from those who are truly “born in Christ.” Galling and irritating as the behaviour of the average Anglo-Indian is to the ordinary Indian, to those who have breathed the free atmosphere of England and have lived and moved and entered into the life and spirit of its people and institutions, its art and literature, the difference of treatment to which they have to submit on their return home is most humiliating and past endurance. When placed in such a situation, as I not infrequently have been, I have wondered within myself if I would care to throw a passing glance at these pale, shrivelled-up creatures should I happen to meet them in Hyde Park or in the streets of Cheltenham. It must be remembered that when the King-Emperor journeyed all the way to India with a message of peace and goodwill he delivered that message to his own subjects and *not* to the subjects of his subjects, and when at the historic Durbar he announced his Coronation to the Princes and People of India and gave them his loving greetings, he did so to his own princes and to his own people who, equally with his English people, owed allegiance to him direct and who were subjects of the British Crown, and not the subjects of certain English administrators under the Crown. “We are all *fellow-citizens* of a great Empire,” said Lord Willingdon on the day of his landing in India; “it is in that spirit I come amongst you to-day, determined to give my strength, my energies and all that is best in me.” It is in this spirit we wish our English administrators to come amongst

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us, and it is in this spirit we wish them to conduct themselves amongst us. But such a wish in the common round of daily life remains, after all, a pious hope. We, of course, do not complain if membership is denied to us in Anglo-Indian clubs all over the country, but surely it is taxing our forbearance too much if we are chased out of their sacrosanct premises when some unavoidable circumstance takes us inside one of them. I remember some years ago a friend of mine, Mr. M., who is a solicitor of the Bombay High Court, was asked by one of his colleagues, Mr. B., who was ill at the time, to go and see him in his rooms at the Byculla Club. My friend, accordingly, drove up to the main entrance of the club, went up the steps, and had hardly crossed the verandah when a Goanese hall-porter rushed up, barred his way, and asked him with a look of perfect astonishment how a native could possibly think of entering the club. Mr. M. only smiled and told him the nature of the business that had brought him there. "You ought not to come by the front door," remonstrated the porter; "even rajahs and maharajahs are not allowed this way; who are you?" Mr. M. simply said that they were quite welcome to do what they liked with rajahs and maharajas, but as he was there by special invitation he would drive away unless he was taken straight to Mr. B. The result was that for once in the long and honourable history of the Byculla Club its sacred threshold was allowed to be defiled by the unhallowed feet of a native.

It is obvious that these atrocious ways of the governing class will no longer be tolerated by any Indian who has the slightest respect for himself or for the land that gave him birth. We were under the impression that the Brahmin alone never let the *mahar* and *chamar* within the shadow of his house, but we find a new caste of super-Brahmins who never let even the Brahmin himself within the shadow of their club-entrances. I am quite certain a few members of the Byculla Club are also members of the Depressed Classes Society, and are this moment ranting on the inhumanity and heinousness of treating any human being as "untouchable," conveniently forgetting all the time that by strictly enforcing that absurd rule of their club they have been for the last half-century putting relatively to themselves all Indians in the position of *mahars* and *chamars*. Could dissimulation go further? Of course, on such terms it is impossible to have any genuine social intercourse, and unless we can be assured of meeting them on a more equal footing, those of us who have any self-respect would disdain to have

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anything to do with these stilted creatures, and whenever possible we would mark our resentment by keeping them out of our own clubs and institutions, as the Asian Club has so aptly and so justly done, by passing a resolution whereby Anglo-Indians alone of all Europeans are prohibited from entering the club premises. The Anglo-Indian may laugh at the resolution, and in his own arrogant way may say the Parsees might have spared themselves the trouble of passing such a resolution, but the far-seeing will see in it the beginning of a new era when the Indian, no longer content with merely quietly resenting the ways of his rulers, will venture on active reprisals. And such reprisals could never be edifying to either party and must chill the heart of those who are the staunch supporters of never ending British rule in India, and in the end serve only to make the latter the butts for the jest and scorn of those who are its declared enemies.

Various causes have been assigned to the ferment of Unrest through which we have been passing for the last ten years, but the most potent cause of all is this irremediable grievance of the superior offensiveness of the ruling race. The more I read and think on this great problem of India, the more I am convinced of what I have stated. Six years ago I was in Bengal, and it did not take me long to get at the main grievance of that highly cultured and deeply sensitive race, the Bengalees. It may be—and personally I still believe—that they are to this day all that Macaulay said of them years ago; but that is no reason why opportunities should be sought out to apply needlessly irritating appellations to them. That isn't "playing the game." "Now, if these men are to be in any sense our subjects," says Professor Gilbert Murray, "that sort of thing is not fair play. It is not fair play and it is not decent policy. If you must insult somebody, insult one who is free and can hit you back. If you want to govern a man, and to have him a loyal and friendly citizen—well, you must give up that luxury. You cannot govern the man and insult him too." If the "horrid natives" constantly get on the nerves of the mem sahib, and the burra-sahib needs must always feel crushed under the weight of "the white man's burden," the easiest way for them is to follow the excellent advice of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and get quit of the people and the burden. "If we cannot tolerate Indian ways in drawing rooms and railway trains, obviously we can do no permanent good in India and should leave the place altogether." No advice could be sounder for those whose nerves are thus affected or whose back aches with the burden;

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and the Government ought certainly to come to their help by pensioning them off regardless of the length of their service. It will in the end be found cheaper to let these poor creatures feed on the Indian exchequer than to let them spend the rest of their time in India in the ennobling task of widening the gulf separating the two races.

It has been truly said: "The Suez canal has brought England and India together only to separate them the more." It cannot be denied that the sympathies of the two races are less kindly now than they were a generation or two back. The clubs, gymkhanas, and associations that have been formed to bring both sexes of the two races into closer social intercourse have resulted in a kind of indifferent formal acquaintanceship, entirely superficial and not infrequently embarrassing — without any of those deep, genuine fellow-feelings by which alone could real friendships be cemented and the increasing bitterness of race feeling lessened. "Relations are getting worse," complained one of the greatest Oriental scholars living to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald; "No Englishman except ——— calls upon me like a son. *Our rulers are making hypocrites of us.*" Wrongly or rightly, this is how the most keen-sighted of us feel — who cannot mince matters and needs must notice that there is some little difference between forced affability and spontaneous cordiality. Formerly English officials took a wider view of their high calling, did not at the approach of the hot season sigh for the hills, nor took frequent furloughs to England, nor impatiently looked forward to the time when their long exile in a "beastly" climate would end. The result was that those men succeeded in a great way in identifying themselves with the people of their adopted country. A few years' continuous stay in India, during which, having no modern contrivances of district clubs and gymkhanas to divert their minds, English officials gave all their time and leisure to the people, learnt by degrees to sympathise with their ways and habits, and thus managed to win their regard and affection and to lay a real bond of union between the rulers and the ruled. Things have changed considerably since then. Perhaps the greatest change was brought about by the introduction of the principle of competition in the selection of candidates for the I.C.S. Great things were expected from this new mode of appointment. It was said that jobbery, patronage, nepotism, and underhand influence would be at once put an end to, and the most talented men from all strata of society would be secured for the service. It is open to serious question whether



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the high hopes entertained of "the competitive test" have been at all fulfilled, and whether the service on the whole has not lost more than it has gained by it. That the system leaves no room for jobbery or underhand influence goes without saying. But that a system which, after all, is a mere memory-contest between crammed men—as to which of them can best reproduce facts, figures and formulas, dates, names and theories, and the rest of the learned lumber with which their coaches have packed or rather burdened their minds—can secure men of real administrative worth or those born to rule and lead, is on the face of it ludicrous. And what in theory we should have expected from this system has actually been realised in practice. "We, Mr. Wadia, are turned absolutely into machines," blurted out a young I.C.S. friend of mine the other day; and so they are. Our modern officials are less men and more machines, wonderfully well adapted by means of their indispensable facts and figures for methodically grinding out stereotyped reports and ponderous official documents detailing the steady progress of their districts. If men were machines of which the motive power was some agent of calculable force, the modern official would be all right and his remarkable mechanical excellencies would pass unchallenged. But unfortunately for him an average Indian is less of a machine than an average European. He still retains almost all his native human instincts, which have not as yet been drilled out of him by the rigid code of a mechanical civilisation. Consequently, being entirely human, he needs men, not codes, to rule him. The old Haileybury man met his purpose very well, while the modern "competition walla" has failed to do so. "The most perfect system of administration," remarks *The Pioneer*, one of the staunchest champions of the Indian bureaucracy, "which the world has ever seen, has come to be regarded by many—and an increasing number—as a top-heavy bureaucratic hierarchy, Byzantine in method if not in spirit, hide-bound by precedent and theory, detached from practical conditions, mechanical and doctrinaire." When *The Pioneer* is led to such remarks, what more need be said!

The old Haileybury Service was composed of men of birth and breeding. Their fathers were generally men of position and influence, and were mostly relatives and friends of the Directors of the East India Company. Many of them had been born in India, and often their fathers and grandfathers were members of the same Service, and the associations they thus formed from their early childhood and the traditions they

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personally inherited, gave them some stake, or at any rate some vital interest in the country, mitigated to a great extent the feeling of exile and, what was more, ensured for the Indians, if not an absolutely efficient and pure, a truly sympathetic rule. But when the Civil Service of India—a country by far the most aristocratic in the world—was thrown open to the sons of everybody and anybody, few of whom had any connection with or had in their childhood heard even the name of India, is it to be wondered at if it gradually became unpopular as it was increasingly filled by men of purely mercenary motives who went up for the examination, not because the traditional mystery and fascination of India enthralled their imagination and made their blood run warm and fast through their veins, nor because the sad plight of its inhabitants and their ignorance and gross superstition touched their heart or awakened their religious fervour, but because they were told that the Indian Civil Service was the best paid service in the world, which offered a really enviable status and qualified them for a substantial pension when they were hardly middle-aged. When such considerations allure men to India, it is little wonder that they should be found deficient in sympathy and imagination. Besides this test, the Service invented two other expedients,—to undermine still further its prestige and noble traditions and take away even the few opportunities it possessed of developing later on the characteristics which it sadly lacked—namely, district clubs and hill-stations. Formerly, when there were no clubs, the official, when at headquarters, generally spent his evening hours among the people or in acquiring a first-hand knowledge of their art, religion, or literature; now he spends them in his club, playing bridge, or badminton, or billiards, or still worse, in the endless tittle-tattle of his little official world. If, however, he obtains leave to pass a few weeks up on a hill-station, he fritters away most of his holiday in a senseless round of gaieties. Go where he will, there is always the eternal club to turn him into a slave and make him pass the best hours of the day and night in her service. When not pressed into her service, there are countless calls to be paid, no end of picnics and teas, dinners and concerts and enough dances to turn the most sober man giddy. Here is a sample of their doings taken from my collection of newspaper cuttings,<sup>1</sup> which gives some idea of the life of "the hard-worked official" in a City where the Government of Bombay has its seat for four months of the year—

<sup>1</sup> *The Times of India*, October 14, 1912.

## POONA LETTER.

### The End of the Season.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

POONA, October 11.

"Poona-ataxia" is the prevalent complaint here. This malady differs entirely from the fashionable "Poona-itis," not being caused by a microbe or bacillus, but the result of incessant gaiety on a delicate mind in an enervating climate. The most prominent symptom of the disease is the insatiable desire to sleep and to put off till to-morrow what should be done to-day. It is in fact the cause of my long silence. Bacchus' case is even worse than mine. Poona has attacked him severely and is rapidly crippling him in body, mind and soul; but he is only one of the large majority who are paying forfeit for their lives of pleasure in Poona. But let me not harass readers further with our sufferings, but rather pick up the threads of events from where we dropped them and crave the pardon of an indulgent editor.

The letter, after recounting the piteous tale of their "sufferings," speaks of the wonderful vitality of these revellers,—'In spite of late nights, there have been large attendances at the meets. A second supper at a dance takes the place of "Chota Hazri." The undefeated (?) sportsman merely calls in at his rooms to have a bath and change of clothes before taking his seat in his carriage preparatory to an 8-mile drive to the meet. The refreshing air in the early mornings perhaps makes up for a great deal and resurrects the vitality of these untiring hunters.'

May I ask, Is this how the swaggering Imperialist supports "the white man's burden"? Is this how the haughty bureaucrat means to uphold "the glories of the Island race"? Are these the men to hold the "native" in contempt? Well

might Mr. Ramsay Macdonald say : "When a person got 'sunbaked' by long residence in India he was not good for anything, although he thought he knew everything. While he ceased to be a Westerner, he never had the sympathetic or mental capacity to become an Oriental, and they found him in the end reproducing, in his own personal characteristics, all the vices of both worlds, and showing very few indeed of the virtues of either." His secret enemies may pander to this weakness of his, for they could wish for nothing better than that he should still further welter in the mire of Pleasure ; but his candid friends, on the other hand, will, by plain speaking, open his eyes to the fact that he is fast undermining his power, damaging his PRESTIGE which is such a fetish with him, and is not far from making himself appear ridiculous in the eyes of the sober-minded Indian. I write in general terms, always remembering that there are scores and scores of officials who, scorning delight, live laborious days in the burning plains, act up to the noble traditions of the great Service, most honourably fulfil their obligations towards us and are, in fact, the mainstays of British rule in India.

Though most of the witnesses called by the present Royal Commission pronounced the prevalent system of examination for the Civil Service of India as "generally satisfactory," still most other men feel that sooner or later some radical changes will have to be introduced in it. It is evident that memory or the power of reproducing what is crammed into the candidate's head can not for long be the principal test of a candidate's fitness to enter the Service. If its members were primarily required to write out literary reports crammed with learned formulas and wise sayings from Solomon downwards, this glorification of Memory would certainly have been justified. But as it is, their primary duty is not to write at all but to secure the attachment and confidence of the people by personal exertion and courteous bearing so as to establish a fresh empire over their heads and hearts. India does not need clever men, but men of strong personality and vivid imagination, and such as possess the indispensable gift of managing men so as to command respect and obedience by resolution and suavity of temper rather than by brute force and hectoring language. It is "the personal equation," as every student of our history knows, which is the one secret of success in India. A vivid, vital individuality seems to be the one thing needful to bring East and West in closest touch. And no mode of conducting examinations is so ill-suited to secure this type of men as

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the one that is now in vogue. I admit it is the best conceivable mode of recruiting Clerks destined to pass their life on the stool at Somerset House or the Admiralty, but for picking out rulers of men on whom the peace and happiness of a fifth part of humanity depends, no system could be more ill-adapted. Some method of examination more personal and less mechanical will have to be invented, and every encouragement given to the sons of the old officials to enter the Service, if the Service is not to deteriorate and lose whatever traditions it has accumulated from the times of Munro and Malcolm, Elphinstone and Edwardes. "It is also my belief," said Mr. Justice Batchelor to the Royal Commissioners, "that India is a decidedly aristocratic country, i.e. the masses of the people attach more importance to genealogy than to brains. *If an Indian officer, of whatever intellectual capacity, is known to be of humble origin, he is apt to command less respect than he deserves.*" Moreover, something will have to be done and done speedily to check the spread of that most insidious of infectious diseases—"poonaataxia." The warning which the German Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, recently gave to all Englishmen applies with special force to those out in the Tropics. "England's greatest enemy," remarked the Prince, "is the sybaritic mode of life of her satiated people, who have been lulled to sleep by riches and good living." Far be it from my mind to suggest that the hard-worked official should have no enjoyments and no pleasures. Most certainly he should have them, and have them in sufficient measure to keep up the tone and vigour of his mind and body and to relieve the tedium which is inseparable from life in the districts. But I submit there is a wide and irreconcilable difference between these invigorating enjoyments of life and those endless rounds of enervating pleasure which result in "poonaataxia." It is the old story of confusing the means with the end. Clubs and gymkhanas, holidays and hill stations, long furloughs and early pensions, which were all invented as the means of making the civilian take a more lively and sustained interest in his responsible work, seem now to have become the end and aim of his life, in consideration of which he consents to pass a few years of dreary existence in this Land of Regrets. "The dream of the modern civilian," says Mr. O'Donnell, "is not so much India and its progress as the thrice happy day when he can bid adieu to the East and return to an English fireside. He is approximating more year by year to the Frenchman, who hates his exile in Saigon or Toukin and longs for Paris and

his beloved France. The Frenchman has largely failed as a colonial administrator for this very reason, and the same fate is rapidly overtaking his English compeer." I do not pity the Civilian so much for his fondness for pleasure as for what he misses thereby. If I could but make him believe the almost unbelievable responsiveness of an Indian's heart! If I could for a moment make him realise what affection there is to be had for the asking, what truth for the trusting, what honour for a single act of justice, what lifelong service for a word of love, he would have to admit that he has missed a perennial source of joy and goodwill in his anxiety to secure a few hours of meaningless pleasure. Let him but read the lives of Sir J. Lawrence or Mountstuart Elphinstone, of Malcolm or Forbes, of Outram or Nicholson—nay, let him only read Ruskin's *Life of Sir Herbert Edwardes* or Bradshaw's *Life of Sir Thomas Munro*—the Mandava Rishi in whose honour the wandering minstrels of Cuddapah to this day compose ballads and sing songs of praise—and he will soon know what wonders a civilian of a feeling mind and an understanding heart can perform by simply taking the people along with him, sharing their feelings and giving them a share in his own. It is said that "Rome perished from the failure of the crop of men." Let Rome's successor beware! The Decline and Fall of the British Empire can only come from the failure of the crop of men. And British rule in India will and can only come to an end not by the blatancy of the Bengalees or the machinations of the Mahrattas, but by the failure of England to send the right type of men to her distant Dependency.

Let us now turn to the third article in the creed of the Pro-British Party—namely, "The employment of as many Indians as possible in the higher grades of the Public Service compatible with the active maintenance of its tone and traditions." It has been the custom of our political writers to quote and requote, and quote a hundred times over, the 87th Clause of the Charter Act of 1833, whereby the public services of India were thrown open to all, irrespective of their caste, colour or creed, and a passage from the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 repeating and reaffirming the declaration of policy made in that Clause. Important as this 87th Clause of the Charter Act undoubtedly is, much too much has been sought to be made of it. After all, divested of its grandiose phraseology, it amounts to the mere removal of legal disabilities, if there were any in the Statutory law—which I doubt,—but it certainly did not open the higher offices of the

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State to any class of men, so long as there were other barriers to their admission, just as effective as though they were constructed by an Act of Parliament. It certainly did not open the doors of office to incompetent candidates. That there were, thenceforth, to be no external disqualifications, and such as there were were to be from within is as plain as daylight. But there was nothing in the Clause to meet the plea of disqualification, should that be advanced by the Company's agents in India to keep out natives from their preserves. The Court of Directors, who were ever actuated by the most zealous care for the well-being and advancement of the people placed under their rule and guidance, as they believed, by a Higher Power, knew fully well that the plea of "disqualification" and "unfitness" would be constantly advanced by their servants in India, and consequently for all practical purposes the Clause would remain so *inoperative* that it might as well have been left uninserted in the great Act. It was, in any view of the case, a matter of the gravest importance, and one to which it was incumbent upon the Directors to give their deepest consideration. They did give it this consideration, and in the following year, having matured their opinions in the form of a Minute, forwarded it to the Supreme Government of India. They argued that if, as they believed they were justified in assuming, the people of India were not yet ripe for employment in the highest branches of the public service, it was clearly the duty of their rulers to render them so with the utmost possible despatch. It was desirable, they said, that by the improvement of the native mind, the people of India should be qualified to compete at no disadvantage with their European rivals. I consider this Minute on the Clause so incomparably more important than the famous Clause itself, and so few of our best writers and politicians seem to be aware even of its existence, that I am compelled to resurrect the whole of it here—

"By clause 87 of the Act, it is provided that no person, by reason of his birth, creed, or colour, shall be disqualified from holding any office in our service.

"It is fitting that this important enactment should be understood, in order that its full spirit and intention may be transfused through our whole system of administration.

"You will observe that its object is not to ascertain qualification, but to remove disqualification. It does not break down or derange the scheme of our Government as conducted principally through the instrumentality of our regular servants,

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Civil and Military. To do this would be to abolish, or impair, the rules which the legislature has established for securing the fitness of the functionaries in whose hands the main duties of Indian administration are to be reposed; rules, to which the present Act makes a material addition in the provisions relating to the College at Hayleybury, but the meaning of the enactments we take to be, that there shall be no governing Caste in British India, that whatever other tests of qualifications may be adopted, distinctions of race or religion shall not be of the number; that no subject of the King, whether of Indian, or British, or mixed descent, shall be excluded, either from the posts usually conferred on our uncovenanted servants in India, or the covenanted service itself, provided he be otherwise eligible, consistently with the rules, and agreeably to the conditions, observed and exacted in the one case and in the other.

“In the application of this principle, that which will chiefly fall to your share, will be the employment of natives, whether of the whole or the mixed blood, in official situations. So far as respects the former class, we mean natives of the whole blood, it is hardly necessary to say, that the purposes of the Legislature have, in a considerable degree, been anticipated. You will know, and indeed have in some important respects carried into effect, our desire that natives should be admitted to places of trust, as freely and extensively as a regard for the due discharge of the functions attached to such places will permit. Even judicial duties of magnitude and importance are now confided to their hands, partly, no doubt, from considerations of economy, but partly also on the principles of a liberal and comprehensive policy, still, a line of demarcation, to some extent in favour of the natives, to some extent in exclusion of them, has been maintained. Certain offices are appropriated by them; from certain others they are debarred; not because these latter belong to the covenanted service, and the former do not belong to it; but professedly on the ground that the average amount of native qualifications can be presumed only to rise to a certain limit. It is this line of demarcation which the present enactment obliterates, or rather, for which it substitutes another, wholly irrespective of the distinction of the races. Fitness is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility.

“To this altered rule it will be necessary that you should, both in your acts and in your language, conform. Practically, perhaps, no very marked difference of results will be occasioned.



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prevailed throughout the land, was, to say the least, extremely disingenuous and scarcely calculated to do justice to the rare talents of that renowned statesman. However, when he declared that—"the highest ranks of civil employment in India, those in the Imperial Civil Service, though open to such Indians as can proceed to England and pass the requisite tests, must, nevertheless, as a general rule be held by Englishmen, for the reason that they possess, partly by heredity, partly by upbringing, and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of government, the habits of mind and the vigour of character which are essential for the task, and that the rule of India being a British rule, and any other rule being in the circumstances of the case impossible, the tone and standard should be set by those who have created and are responsible for it"—Lord Curzon laid down a sound line of policy. Instead of unworthily attempting to explain away inconvenient declarations of policy that were made in the past, and thus opening themselves to the charge of "breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear," it is always a wise, honourable, and in the end statesmanlike course to admit them in the most unequivocal terms, and then openly and courageously renounce them and lay down a new line of policy, trusting for its soundness and justice to remove in the course of time whatever heartburning and distrust it may have created in the first instance. In the days of mid-Victorian Liberalism, when the mission of England in India was considered to be "to qualify the Indians for governing themselves," that policy of absolute equality in matters of appointment to high offices was entirely natural and justifiable; but now, when the wisest statesmen of the Liberal Party itself have declared in unmistakable terms that the mission of England in India is to rule her righteously with even handed justice and genuine sympathy for a time that cannot be measured or computed, that policy of absolute equality is no longer tenable, and needs modification. To adopt the words of our great leader, it can never be absolutely equal, nor can it be absolutely just, but it must be so far just and equal as to be reasonably satisfactory, and I believe that the line of policy laid down by Lord Curzon is more or less reasonably satisfactory, as the most practical-minded of the Congress Party themselves admit. "Let it be understood," openly declares Mr. H. P. Mody, "that we have no desire to monopolise the higher branches of the Imperial service." Still, few will be prepared to admit that "that is justice ought to be done for the Indians" in this

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branch of the Service has been done. The appointments held by Indians carrying a salary of over Rs. 1000 are considerably under 10 per cent. of the total number. This, after eighty years, speaks very little for the exertions of the British Government in India to carry out the express injunction of the Court of Directors—viz. to remove all disqualifications which stood in the way of natives of India rising to the highest posts in their own country. Surely the staunchest upholders of permanent British rule will grant that this paltry proportion might safely be increased to 12 or 15 per cent., and after many years to even 20 per cent., and that there need be no apprehension of the Public Service losing its long traditions or suffering in its tone or falling behind the standard "set by those who have created and are responsible for it."

The question which was constantly discussed in and outside the Congress Mandap, and which has been, ever since the Services Commission sat, the one subject of discussion in political circles, is that of the holding of Simultaneous Examinations for the I.C.S. both in England and India. *In theory* few fair-minded men would question the justice of the demand; and the demand becomes more insistent when we consider that in the whole of India there are 1,294 I.C.S.'s, of whom only *Fifty-six* are Indians, *i.e.* something less than  $4\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. *In practice*, however, as long as the present system of examination prevails and Memory is held to be the Divine test of the fitness of a candidate to enter the Service, it would do more harm than good to India; for the Service would be simply swamped by the quick-brained Bengalees and the plodding Mahrattas. Except in this test, a Parsee of average talents would prove superior to either of them in the more really important qualifications for a trained administrator and leader of men, and in worthily upholding the status of a Civilian and the traditions of the great Service. Until, therefore, we can evolve a system of recruitment that could test the *all-round* fitness of a candidate, it is in the interests of all the innumerable nationalities that go to form India that the examination should continue to be held in England only.

It has been urged in some quarters that on the same grade an Englishman should be given a higher salary than an Indian. Many ingenious and plausible arguments have been advanced, even in some instances by the most thorough-going Congressites, to justify this difference of treatment in the matter of wages. Their main contention, however, is that it would effect a saving in the national expenditure. But it is forgotten that with

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The distinctions between situations allotted to the covenanted service, and all other situations of an official or public nature, will remain generally as at present.

“Into a more particular consideration of the effects that may result from the great principle which the Legislature has now for the first time recognised and established, we do not enter, because we would avoid disquisition of a speculative nature. But there is one practical lesson, which, often as we have on former occasions inculcated it on you, the present subject suggests to us *once more to enforce*. While, on the one hand, it may be anticipated that the range of public situations accessible to the native and mixed races, will gradually be enlarged, it is, on the other hand, to be recollected that, as settlers from Europe find their way into the country, this class of persons will probably furnish candidates for those very situations to which the natives and mixed races will have admittance. Men of European enterprise and education will appear in the field, and it is by the prospect of this event that we are led particularly to impress the lesson already alluded to, on your attention. In every view it is important that the indigenous people of India, or those among them who by their habits, character, or position, may be induced to aspire to office, should, as far as possible, be qualified to meet their European competitors. Hence there arises a powerful argument for the promotion of every design tending to the improvement of the natives, whether by conferring on them the advantages of education, or by diffusing among them the treasures of science, knowledge, and moral culture. For these desirable results, we are well aware that you, like ourselves, are anxious; and we doubt not that, in order to impel you to increased exertion for the promotion of them, you will need no stimulant beyond a simple reference to the considerations we have here suggested.

“While, however, we entertain these wishes and opinions, we must guard against the supposition that it is chiefly by holding out means and opportunities of official distinction, that we expect our Government to benefit the millions subjected to their authority. We have repeatedly expressed to you a very different sentiment. Facilities of official advancement can little effect the bulk of the people under any Government, and perhaps least under a good Government. *It is not by holding out incentives to official ambition, but by repressing crime, by securing and guarding property, by creating confidence, by ensuring to industry the fruit of its*

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labour, by protecting men in the undisturbed enjoyment of their rights, and the unfettered exercise of their faculties, that Governments best minister to the public wealth and happiness. In effect, the free access to office is chiefly valuable when it is a part of general freedom."<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen at a glance that the most important passages of the Minute are those where the Court of Directors observe—

1. That its object is not to ascertain qualification, but *to remove disqualification*.

2. That there shall be *no governing Caste* in British India.

3. That the line of demarcation, based on the ground that "the average amount of native qualifications can be presumed only to rise to a certain limit"—must be totally obliterated.

4. That *Fitness* is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility.

It may be asked what, within the last eighty years, has the British Government in India done to carry out these plain and imperative injunctions of the Court of Directors? As regards 1, with the exception of spreading education, it has hardly done anything. With reference to 2, as we have already seen, it has consistently acted against it, and I fully believe that at present there is not a less rigid and exclusive governing Caste than there was in 1834. Turning to 3, in spite of improvements here, there is still a fixed line of demarcation, and I admit to a certain extent it is inevitable under the peculiar conditions of India. When we come to the last, we must admit that the criterion of Fitness has been maintained to a large extent, though not fully.

It will be remembered that Lord Curzon tried to explain away the real import of this memorable Minute by quoting the last paragraph, and maintaining that Governments best minister to the welfare and happiness of the people committed to their charge not by holding out incentives to official ambition, but by repressing crime, by securing and guarding property, etc., conveniently forgetting all the vast changes which the passage of time had introduced since the writing of that Minute. Had he brought this line of argument seventy years ago when Satec, Thuggee, Dacoitee, female infanticide and human sacrifice prevailed, and India was in a state of general insecurity, he would most assuredly have been right. But to advance it when all the hideous forms of crime were totally repressed, and absolute security of life and property

<sup>1</sup> *The Court of Directors to the Government of India, December 1834.*

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the growing needs and desires of an Indian official, he needs almost as much as his English compeer if he wishes to maintain his dignity and do the honours of his high position. Unless he does this, he cannot be expected to receive that attention, respect, and equal treatment from his subordinates and brother officials to which he is entitled, and which we are naturally desirous he should receive. But what is worse, this difference in the scale of wages tends to keep up directly or indirectly, no matter in how small a degree, the principle of unequal treatment and invidious distinction, and sets a line of demarcation between the Indian and the Englishman. This line of demarcation—this hated Colour Line—the most advanced Indians are determined to obliterate in every possible manner. I am reluctant to believe that India is so poor or so much wanting in self-respect as to weigh any unworthy scheme of petty savings against the honour and dignity of her worthiest sons.

Finally, we come to the fourth article in the creed of the Pro-British Party—namely, the devolution on local Governments of as many functions as can be safely entrusted to them without involving any risk to the Central Government of losing its unity of purpose and policy. It has been repeatedly said that India has had to pay an immense price for the peace and prosperity she at present enjoys under the ægis of Great Britain; that she had to give up her birthright of initiative and action in her own affairs; that the manhood of her sturdiest sons is being sapped more and more through the prohibition to bear arms in her defence; that her ablest men, being shut off from positions of trust and responsibility, have become subjects who obey, not citizens who act, and that her people as a whole have degenerated to the level of copyists, and gradually tend to become hewers of wood and drawers of water in the economic development of their own country. Moreover, when we recall the wealth of her splendid literature, the glory of her ancient art, and the fame and universality of her hoary philosophy, this loss of initiative and control and this cutting short of her self-development on her own lines are more deplorable, more irremediable in her case than in that of any other country. In a word, the people have ceased to live, as the younger and more materialistic civilisation attempts to mould and control the older and more spiritualistic civilisation. "Let Britain be subjugated," once argued Sir Thomas Munro, "by a foreign power to-morrow; let the people be excluded from all share in the government, from public honours, from



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every office of high trust and emolument, and let them in every situation be considered as unworthy of trust, and all their knowledge and all their literature, sacred and profane, would not save them from becoming, in another generation or two, a low-minded, deceitful, and dishonest race."

That there is a distinct vein of exaggeration running through these assertions, one could perceive at a glance; yet no honest expounder of India's problems can fail to see a substratum of truth in what must necessarily be the gravamen of her sons as long as England holds sway over her. Here, again, we hear the warning voice of the great Munro: "Our present system of government, by excluding all natives from power, and trust, and emolument, is much more efficacious in depressing, than all our laws and school-books can do in elevating their character. *We are working against our own designs*, and we can expect to make no progress while we work with a feeble instrument to improve, and a powerful one to deteriorate. The improvement of the character of a people, and the keeping them, at the same time, in the lowest state of dependence on foreign rulers, to which they can be reduced by conquest, are matters quite incompatible with each other."

It is obvious, therefore, that some means must be found, some method will have to be invented to soothe India's ruffled pride, and meet her just grievances in this direction. And for the present no remedy can be more effective, nor one more likely to meet the wishes of all parties, than the devolution on local Governments of as many functions as can be safely entrusted to them, and thereby opening out to Indians in their individual provinces opportunities to regain their lost initiative and control in the conduct of their own provincial affairs. Even those who watch with an amused smile the Herculean efforts at nation-building and constitution-making of our political cranks and worthy idealists, are not slow to admit the justice of their demands when they are restricted to smaller areas and confined, more or less, to one people and one province. Lord Crewe, who declared that there was nothing in the teachings of history or in the present condition of the world that made *even remotely probable* the realisation of the dream of self-government within the Empire, most emphatically maintained, on the other hand: "I do think it is our duty to encourage every reasonable and possible want or desire on the part of the inhabitants of India to participate in the further management of their own affairs."

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selves no interpretation of any statesman different to their own would long stand in their way. However much we may differ from the particular interpretation which Mr. Gokhale himself sought to put on the Clause—namely, of having an elected majority in each of the Provincial Legislative Councils, and then forcing the hands of the local Government to accept any measure the majority chose by the simple expedient of bringing it in the Council and passing it year after year—we cannot but applaud the hon. gentleman for courageously advising his countrymen to rely entirely on themselves for the political advancement of their country, instead of adopting the unmanly attitude of most of our invertebrate political theorists, who are frequently heard supplicating the Government for liberty on the Gladstonian formula. The moment we are fit to manage our own affairs, and have acquired the indispensable qualifications for being leaders of men, no power on earth can stand in the way of our just claims. The moment we show a mental and moral superiority over our rulers, we will, like the Greeks of old, “lead captive our captors.” Produce a dozen Gokhales and put two of them in each of the Councils, and British rule to a great extent will exist only in name, for English administrators will in reality be our instruments to carry out our will and follow our direction. But that’s rather a far cry; in the meantime let us be moderate in our demands, and work for a less ambitious goal—namely, to secure for the people of each presidency, province and town, according as its capacity for self-administration increases, an extension of its power and responsibility, initiative and control in the management of its own affairs untrammelled by its neighbours. If such a fair and unequivocal interpretation be put on the much abused phrase “Provincial Autonomy,” a *modus vivendi* for the present could be found for all parties in India, and the Independent Pro-British Party will gladly take up “the immediate aim” of the National Congress Party as its own, and proclaim the attainment of provincial autonomy as its principal object in the near future. There are some who believe that it is possible in the dim, distant future, when most of the Indian nationalities have separately developed into efficient self-administrating units, to combine them into a federation and form the United States of India—but this is a profitless incursion beyond the realms of present-day politics. For a long, long time to come the realisation of the ideal of provincial autonomy ought to find sufficient outlet for our energies, and ample scope for the full play and exercise of

## Reflections on the Problems of India

whatever ability and special qualities the Indian intellect possesses for self-government.

My task is done. If, in the course of it, I have denounced Elementary Education, it is not that I care for the enlightenment of the people less, but that I care for the fulfilment of their life-purpose more; if I have upheld the Caste System, it is not that I am anxious for the elevation of the Mahars less, but that I am anxious for the regeneration of the Brahmins more, if I have condemned the Factorisation of India, it is not that I am solicitous of the development of her industries less, but that I am solicitous of the happiness of her manhood more; and if, finally, I have railed against the fatuous schemes of *svarāj*, it is not that I have at heart the independence of India less, but that I have at heart her welfare more. I claim to be a Son and a Servant of India—nay, more, I am even capable of singing as fervently and with as full a heart as any Bengalee Patriot of

“ My Motherland,

Her splendid streams, her glorious trees,  
The zephyr from the far-off Vindyan heights,  
Her fields of waving corn,  
The rapturous radiance of her moonlight nights,  
The trees in flower that flame afar,  
The smiling days that sweetly vocal are,  
The happy, blessed Motherland ’

Thou art my head, thou art my heart,  
My life and soul art thou,  
My song, my worship and my art,  
Before thy feet I bow—  
My every thought doth thy form unfold—  
Unequalled, tender, happy, pure,  
Of splendid streams, of glorious trees,  
My Motherland I sing ’ ”

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